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CHATSWORTH;

OR,

THE ROMANCE OF A WEEK.

EDITED BY THE

AUTHOR OF "TREMAINE," "DE VERE," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

1844.

London:
Harrison and Co., Printers,
St. Martin's Lane.

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CHATSWORTH.

LOVE CURED BY LOVE,

CONTINUED.

Chapter IV.

Love can debase the mind, as well as raise it; it can soil the soul, as well as purify it; else, with all its power and beauty, it were not a human passion, and therefore not a theme for human sympathy. But it sometimes debases, only to lift to a loftier height than before; it sometimes tries and tortures, only to regenerate and refine. Always it works only on the materials that it finds; neither destroying nor creating.

The King had no sooner dismissed from his mind those first natural emotions which would not be denied their momentary way, on seeing all that was dear to him once more about him, than

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he bethought him of Armusia, whom he would not permit to be absent from his side; and with that deep feeling of brotherly friendship and affection which seemed already to have grown up to maturity within his heart, he desired to know what the views of the young Portuguese were in visiting the island, and how he could repay some portion of the debt of gratitude due for his late noble deliverance.

"I do not bid you let me repay it *all*," said he, "for I feel it press upon me with a sweet pleasure, that I do not wish away. And even if I *would* be quit of it, I cannot. You have given me more than life and freedom; since, in giving me these, you have given me back the power to use them as alone I would—in making those who love and serve me happy. Say, then, what I can do to do you good; and if my power can compass it, think it already done."

Both Ruy Dias and Quisara were present when this was said; and they glanced at each other, as if instinctively, and seemed to wait, with

a repressed impatience, the reply of Armusia. Yet both seemed anxious that nothing like an interchange of intelligence should be observed between them.

"Your thanks, Sir," said Armusia, after a pause,—during which he looked humbly towards Quisara, whose eyes for the first time met his, and made them drop suddenly to the ground, as if in voluntary self-abasement,—"Your thanks, Sir, should be paid to her who enjoined the act, and, in so doing, gave the power to perform it. The Princess," continued he, turning to Quisara again, "willed your deliverance; and in naming its price, assured it. I almost fear to think upon that price. I dare not name it, it is so far beyond the merit of the act."

"What is this, Quisara?" said the King, eagerly, and with an earnest joy looking forth from his gentle countenance. "Name the recompense that I should pay this more than friend and brother; name it; and though it cannot give requital, it may ease the weight of

gratitude that grows upon me every moment while I think of it."

Quisara spoke not,—but the flush that came upon her cheek as the king turned to her, faded into a sick paleness, and her lip trembled. Yet not the less she looked upon Armusia with a cold regard, in which there was something of haughty inquiry intermixed.

"Silent, my sister!" continued the King, when he found that she did not reply,—"silent, when the theme is gratitude for the deliverance of a dear brother from worse than death!—How is this?—and when (as this noble youth avouches) it was yourself who urged the act, and named its price!"

Quisara was still silent; and the King, turning to Armusia, continued,—

"I beseech you speak, Sir. What is it your words point at?"

Finding that all remained silent, Armusia at length replied:—

"I must not, cannot speak, Sir, what you

demand to hear, unless in the words in which *I* heard it: for they still ring in my ears, and have done since I heard them, and watched the lips that uttered them. Nay, their living echoes left not my heart, amid the cries of blood and battle that assailed me as we burst your prison doors this morning,—nor fled even at the shouts of joy that welcomed your return."

Then, after a momentary pause, he continued, in a more slow and solemn tone, and in Quisara's own words:—

"*The deed that can alone win Quisara, is the redeeming, from the bonds of yonder crafty and bad man, her Royal Brother. This were an action worthy to win the sister of that prince; and he who does it, may claim her for his bride. She shall be his alone. I swear it by my royal name and word!*"

The King's face beamed with delight as Armusia spoke; and when he ceased, exclaimed,—

"Ah! and is it so? This were indeed a payment of our great debt, Quisara—making us

all the richer by the outlay.—Why did I not think of this?—But you are silent, my sister! And were those indeed your words, Quisara?" continued he fondly. "What a sweet lightening of my weight of gratitude is this, to find it thus divided! Yet would I fain pay it all to each."

The King was growing garrulous in his pleasure; but his happy thoughts were checked, on looking at Quisara, whose eyes were on the ground, while an uncertain expression overspread her features, which he could not interpret. As the King ceased suddenly from speaking, and looked inquiringly at Quisara, she spoke.

"Those were indeed my words. I cannot forget them."

"Cannot?" interrupted the King, quickly; "and *would* you, then?"

"Spare me, my brother!" resumed she,—approaching him with renewed looks of fondness and joy,—"spare me! I own the gratitude we owe this youth,—and that my word is passed to pay it as he says. But we are strangers to each

other. I never saw him till now. Besides,—my joy at your return stifles all other thoughts. We must have feasts and revelry—and then—"

"Nay, Quisara," interrupted the King, "this is no case for coy delays and humble wooings; nor were they worthy either you, Quisara, or him who claims you."

"Pardon me, Sir!" said Armusia; "I do not *claim* the Princess; nor would I have her think my humble love dares even hope to gain her grace and favour, without that service and observance which it will be my duty and delight to pay, and which (wanting the adventitious merit that my happy fortune has this day given me) I had not dared presume even to offer."

"Well, well," interrupted the King, "I see how it is. But let us separate now, and entertain our several thoughts in private. To-morrow we will talk of this again."

Then, amidst the movement occasioned by the King's motion to retire, he turned to Armu-

sia, and said, in an under tone, in which there was a grave joy mixed—

"She is yours, Armusia; fear it not;—she is your own!"

He then retired to his private apartments; while Quisara, turning also towards hers, stopped for a moment beside Ruy Dias, and looking at him through her half-veiled eye-lids, said, with a sad, desponding head-shake,—

"Ah! this was your *prudence*,—your slothful *prudence*, Ruy Dias."

And so the assembly separated, betaking themselves severally to the privacy of their own thoughts.

Two only must we for the present follow thither,—Quisara and Ruy Dias; and if we find those thoughts, and the emotions that grew therefrom, other than in our passionless abstraction we would have them, let us strive to pity and uphold, not despise and contemn, our common Nature.

Chapter V.

When Quisara was alone, she now for the first time discovered the new secret of her heart. Not the secret that she loved Ruy Dias; for *that* the frank nobleness of her nature had never permitted her to think of concealing, even from him, much less from herself, while she deemed him one whom to love was a virtue, even in her, a princess. The secret that she discovered was, that her love, born of goodness, and rooted in admiration, had attained a self-sufficing strength, which would not let it die, even now that its spring and nourishment were taken from it. She felt that Ruy Dias was not that for which she had loved him; and she grieved for it, in the depths of her heart.

But she felt that, whatever he was, she loved him still; and this at first grieved her still more.

But there can be no long-continued contention in the human heart; least of all in such a gentle heart as Quisara's,—whose sole instinct it was to love, and feel itself beloved. In such a heart gentleness soon triumphs over all, and by its sweet alchemy, converts all opposites to its own hue and character. For a brief while Quisara sighed over her misplaced affection, and felt ashamed of the weakness which prevented her from flinging it off. Then, doubts, and fears, and feminine sophistications, came to the aid of her love, and made it see with their eyes, and speak with their tongues. Then it grew bolder, by the very efforts which its threatened power compelled it to put forth. And at last it rose triumphant over the adverse feelings that assailed it—scattering some into air, as if they had never been, and binding down others to do its will and bidding. In a word, Quisara loved Ruy Dias the more, the more she felt that he was not that for which

she had at first loved him; and the more inherently weak the bonds grew which held her, the more strong they became in her weakness, both of power and of will, to break them.

But was Quisara happy in her love of to-day, as she had been in that of yesterday? And did she yearn to tell it, not only to him who was its object, but to all the world? Alas! no. It pressed upon her heart like a weight—almost of guilt. It filled her fancy with dim forebodings, and threw sadness into her face, and silenced her late joyful voice, and drew her eyes to the ground, as if they dared not show the secrets that were in them.

As for Ruy Dias—his love, while it was not positively opposed by circumstances, had gone on purifying and strengthening his spirit, and lifting his thoughts to a height which they had never reached before, and where,—all things being propitious to his hopes,—they might, perhaps, have maintained themselves. But when, in the very face of his returned affection,

those hopes were threatened, all the noble parts of his nature gave way before the base ones; and thoughts began to stir within him, which at other times would have struck a cold horror through his heart, but which now he first permitted—then entertained—and, at last, looked about him deliberately for the means of putting into act.

Let not those who do not *feel* the possibility of this so sudden change, the less believe it. Let them remember that our human nature is but an instrument, more or less weak to resist the will of the circumstances that play upon it. And, moreover, let them not forget that Ruy Dias had reached that period of life when all our other passions—even love itself, the least obedient of all—yields itself up to the yoke of that *self*-love which is the earliest-born and the latest-lived of them all, and sooner or later reduces them all to its will.

For some days after the return of the King, Ruy Dias was seen wandering about alone,

from place to place, with a black melancholy clouding his looks, which every now and then seemed to be dispersed for a moment, by thoughts which came to him as if against his will, and made him stop, and start, and question himself inwardly, and then hurry forward as if he would escape from some unseen trouble.

There was a young Portuguese soldier, named Piniero, a nephew of Ruy Dias, who had been brought to the island by the latter, and placed in a command in the garrison. This young man was of a quick and shrewd wit. But though occasionally carried away by this, and by the fine flow of animal spirits which belonged to his time of life, he was of a noble and stedfast nature, unbounded in his admiration of goodness, even though it were of a kind which he himself could not pretend or hope to reach; and he was not to be moved to admit even a thought of baseness.

Piniero had not failed to observe the new condition of his uncle, Ruy Dias, (whom he

greatly loved) and was watching an opportunity of learning its cause; when, as if by accident—though each was in fact seeking to encounter the other—they met. Piniero, it should be said, was not without shrewd suspicions as to the nature of his uncle's sentiments towards Quisara; and therefore did not fail to suspect that the King's return, and the consequent pretensions of Armusia, were mixed with the new feelings which had of late taken possession of Ruy Dias.

"Good morrow, Sir," said Piniero, when they met.

"Nephew," said Ruy Dias, "I would speak with you." He paused a moment, and then went on: "You know how I love you, Piniero; how long I have loved you; what I have done for you; how I bred you (wanting a father) with a father's care and tenderness."

"He talks," thought Piniero, "as if he was going to ask a boon of me."

"The station in which I have put you,"

continued Ruy Dias, "is no mean one. It is next to myself in honour and reward. These are testimonies that I have not forgotten you." Then looking at him steadfastly for a moment, he added, "In return, I would not be forgotten by you Piniero—I hope I am not."

"What does this point at, Sir?" said Piniero, seriously—impressed by his uncle's manner, more than by his words. "*Have* I forgotten you?—or is my nature such, to make you fear I should?"

"Oh Piniero!" sighed forth Ruy Dias; and the thoughts out of which his words grew seemed to shake his heart as he uttered them,—"Oh, my dear nephew!"

"What is it that oppresses and disturbs you, Sir?" said Piniero, as his uncle paused.—"I have observed that you are not yourself; that your clear brow is clouded; your firm gait troubled; your thoughts travelling abroad for food that they should find at home. Could I know the cause of these, I might help to alter or defeat it."

"You can, you can," interrupted Ruy Dias suddenly, and with a vehement anxiety in his manner, which seemed to shoot light into the mind of Piniero, as to the theme of his thoughts; and he waited for his uncle to proceed. Ruy Dias suddenly stopped, and his thoughts seemed to fall back upon themselves abashed.

"Oh, my best nephew," continued he, after a brief pause, his voice assuming a mournful expression—"the Princess!"

He again paused; and Piniero said,—"You love her, Sir—is it not so? And you would fain have done the deed yourself—(it was a noble one!) that is to gain her?"

"That is to *gain* her?" echoed Ruy Dias, while a tumultuous expression of passion agitated his countenance. "She is mine, Piniero!—she loves me—and but for that Armusia—"

"Ha!" thought Piniero; and a flush of indignant regret passed across his face—"is it so?"

"But for that stranger," continued Ruy

Dias, after a momentary pause—"that blighter of my hopes—that blotter-out of my honour."

"Aye," thought Piniero again, "now it comes flowing from him gaily! I feared as much—I thought that he who dared leave undone, when love and honour urged him to be doing, dared to do evil when his ends asked for it."

"But he has done a brave thing, uncle," said Piniero aloud; "a noble one, and——"

"He has done a thing, nephew," interrupted Ruy Dias, "which undoes me—which strikes me to the earth—which treads me (like a name written in sand) to nothing—which hangs, like a prodigious cloud, between me and my light, and buries me in darkness."

Then, after a brief pause, and recovering the self-possession which his vehemence had driven away, he added, looking at Piniero steadfastly:

"And if *I* am nothing, Piniero, what will *you* be? Were not this worth considering?"

Piniero's quick thoughts pierced his uncle's

design, and his course was taken on the instant, and without a single self-questioning or hesitation. Returning his uncle's steadfast look, he said.

"It *is* worth considering—and, to be sudden and to the purpose, as friends should—say that this Armusia were removed—(as may be easily done—) how stands the Princess?"

"Oh, she is mine for ever," interrupted Ruy Dias, eagerly; "she contemns him and his deed."

"But would she countenance his taking off?" asked Piniero. "She has a high and honourable fame. True, she loves, you say—and love is no over-nice casuist. Briefly, uncle; give me access to the lady; and if I find her not averse to this enterprize, I may find the means of compassing it. Besides,—you know the power of a bright lady's eyes upon me. They have often made a fool of me before now; it were hard indeed, then, if they and gratitude together cannot for once make a simple villain of me!"

"Why this is more than I had hoped," said Ruy Dias; and he drew from his breast a letter, addressed to the Princess, which he had prepared before hand, in case his nephew should fall in with his views—"this is as it should be. I had almost feared some boyish scruples, bred of a soft heart and a thoughtless head, might have marred my hopes. But I find you wiser than I thought."

"You *will* find me wiser than you think, good uncle,"—said Piniero to himself.

"Here—take this letter," continued Ruy Dias. "This will make your way to the Princess's private ear, and let her know the purport of your errand. You will find her all that we could wish. She loves me, Piniero,—and where love is, all things else must bow and yield before it. Farewell!—I know your prudence and discretion, when you choose to exercise them—and I trust my hopes to them. When you have seen the Princess, come to me again. Remember—I trust to you."

"Lucky you do trust to me, good uncle," said Piniero to himself, as Ruy Dias left him—"for when you trust yourself, you trust a knave, I see. So," continued he, as he proceeded on his errand—"this, then, is the noble Portuguese—the brave, the generous, the just Ruy Dias! A special piece of divinity this love must be! Besides his other merits, (some of which I knew before,) he can metamorphose an honest man into a villain, in the twinkling of a lady's eye! That is, provided (like my good uncle, here) he has lived long enough in the world to learn differences and distinctions. But can the lady know of this? can *she* (still so young) have taken the Devil's degree in Love's college? I think not. And yet she is a Princess, and therefore should have her will—and moreover, she i a woman, and therefore *will* have it. But can it *be* her will, to take this same honourable uncle of mine, merely for his smooth tongue, and his fair, albeit somewhat faded presence, and leave a braver and a better man—as much better

as, in Love's arithmetic, twenty-five is more than forty—and one who has nobly won, and would proudly and fondly wear her? There's no saying. She loves him, he says: and as it has pleased Love to make a knave of *him*, it were but fair in his divinityship to make a fool of *her*. Well—we shall see. But if ever *I* turn lover, (which beauty forbid!) I hope heaven, in its mercy, will incontinently help me to a halter, and the heart to use it—for I am but indifferently honest as it is; and love might chance to make a scoundrel of me!—Murder in cold blood! for to hear the lectures he has given me on the heat of mine, *his* blood must be as cold as Caucasus.—They say 'Love and Ambition draw the Devil's coach.' It must be my care (and it shall) to see that, in the present journey, they do not tumble the passengers over a precipice."

Chapter VI.

Such were the cogitations that passed through the mind, and indeed found their way to the frank lips, of the light-hearted Piniero, as he proceeded on his way to the Princess's palace. But as he approached it, his almost irrepressible gaiety of spirit once more gave place to that serious and steadfast thoughtfulness, which occasions like the present were capable of calling forth in him.

It was a dangerous and delicate office that he had taken upon him; and it would task all his wit and courage to carry himself safely under it: for he would fain save his uncle and the Princess from the sin and shame that seemed

to await them, but was still more strongly determined on turning aside the danger that threatened the noble Armusia. How he should effect both, or either, of these ends, must depend on the mood in which he should find Quisara, touching his uncle's project.

On reaching the palace, he solicited an interview, in the name of Ruy Dias, and was presently admitted. He found the Princess sad and thoughtful; but she received him graciously: and as he had the wit to judge women more by their looks than their words, he watched her with the strictest scrutiny, as she read the letter from his uncle, which he presented to her. Bu he could gather nothing positive from her looks. A momentary gleam of pleasure—not untinged by an added degree of sadness—passed across her face as she read the superscription, and opened the letter; and as she perused its contents, her cheek flushed, and then grew pale, and then flushed again: and he thought that the paper shook and rustled in her hand, as

she held it. But he could make nothing out, from these signs, as to the temper in which she took his uncle's proposition for getting rid of the claims of Armusia;—for such he judged the purport of the letter to be.

When Quisara had read the first side of the paper, she turned the leaf over; and as Piniero's eye glanced for an instant from her face to her action, he perceived that the page was blank. Still, however, she kept her eyes steadfastly fixed upon it, as if reading; but there was no fluctuating emotion in her face; on the contrary, it gradually reacquired that self-possessed air which was usual to it,—but mixed with a sadness deeper than before, and almost taking the garb of severity. At length, she suddenly gathered the paper into her hand, and looked at Piniero keenly, for a moment. She then addressed him:—

"Do you know the contents of this paper, Sir?"

"I guess them, Lady," said Piniero, with a

show of great respect and deference; "and the business that they point at."

"Well, Sir?" resumed Quisara inquiringly,—but Piniero remained silent, and she continued:—

"It is a business of no common moment—asking no mean care and skill, and bearing about it no slight danger. Am I to think that, in being the bringer of this letter, you dare undertake the act it points at?"

"Think, Lady," replied Piniero, "that I dare do anything *you* would have done, and dare bid me do."

"It is for me, then, you would do it—not your uncle?"

"It were best not seek to know this. Suffice it, that if you wish it done, and sanction the doing——"

"I would fain," said she——

"Have it done?" interrupted Piniero, catching hastily at her words; for it was the first glimpse she had given him by which he could

venture to judge with any certainty of her sentiments.

"Conceive it so," said Quisara.

Piniero's countenance flashed with a momentary indignation as she uttered the words, but it was as instantly repressed; and he waited to hear what further she would say.

"At present I would be alone," she continued. "I will think more of this. Do you so too—and come to me to-morrow. In the meantime, say to your uncle that I would see him here, to-night, upon the hour of ten—here, in my private ante-chamber. Bid him ask for Panura, my chief attendant, who will conduct him in."

Quisara then abruptly quitted the apartment; and as Piniero left the palace, he could not help communing with himself on the result of his interview; though his feelings in regard to it were not exactly the same as those which followed the disclosure of his uncle's views.

"This woman is cunning," thought he, as

he went, pondering on the course he should take; "she is cunning,—but she is bloody! She would but half disclose her wishes to me—perchance to herself; but she would compass them, nevertheless, spite of her oath and honour. Well—I must only the more shrewdly bear myself between them, to keep off some slave, fashioned and fleshed to what they wish, who might else step in, and act their thoughts, even before they have put them into wishes: for there be such, even among our boasted Portugals."

Then, resuming his ordinary vein, as his own free and honest thoughts came back upon him, he continued,—

"And this is Love's doing—Love, the immortal—Love, the pure—the purifier! Such, at least, our poets swear he is. *I* swear he is a knave—the greatest among the gods—which, (in reverence be it spoken!) is saying not a little. The veriest sinner that ever descended from Olympus, to teach us our duties! Well—only

let anybody, henceforth, call me *a lover!* *A liar* one may bear—from a friend!—but '*a lover*' is high treason to any gentleman's honour, and should be forthwith laid down as the only case in which the *duello* is peremptory."

Chapter VII.

Turn we now for a while to Armusia. His noble and eager spirit was struck with a feeling of deep disappointment, when he found that his happy success, in the deliverance of the King, was not to be immediately followed up by that only consequence which he had looked for from it. This threw him at first into a sadness, which was increased by perceiving (as he soon did) the cause of his disappointment. The Princess was evidently predisposed in favour of another. He (Armusia) was not the person who *should* have done her high bidding, in restoring her brother to his throne and people.

Still Armusia could not persuade himself

that Quisara had conceived any deep or insurmountable sentiment towards another, or that she would have lightly pledged her oath to an act which a still more sacred feeling might prevent her from performing. From what he now saw, it was evident to him that she had intended her words (at the public audience of her suitors) to arouse Ruy Dias alone to the performance of the act they pointed at; thinking, as she did, that he alone was worthy and capable of performing it. But he persuaded himself, that now she had found him wanting in that noble daring which could alone deserve her entire affection, she might cease to cherish that admiration of his character, which could alone have won her favour.

In any case, Armusia was too young, and of too ardent a temper, to despair; and yet his love, though already a settled sentiment of his mind and heart, was of too delicate and pure a character to permit of his either hoping or wishing to see its views furthered by anything aside or apart from itself. He determined, therefore, on

seeking an interview with Quisara, and letting his love plead its own cause with her; predetermining to controul it only in not permitting it to urge any claims but those which sprung out of itself: for he loved too purely and too wisely to feel that anything but love can give us claims to be beloved.

But in seeking this interview with Quisara, Armusia foresaw that he must take a prompt and a bold course—as he had done in the late enterprise; for his temper, no less than the strength of his love, made him disposed to be anything but a whining lover, or to sigh himself away in empty and unavailing sorrows. His love was as confident in its strength, as it was unpresuming in its humility; and, however adverse to his hopes Quisara might at present seem, he was not willing to abandon those hopes without giving them a fair chance of working out their own success. He therefore determined on (if possible) presenting himself before her under circumstances which should compel her to

at least see and judge of the nature of his suit, and not give her the choice of avoiding a comparison which, if her love for Ruy Dias was but in its infancy, he had at least no cause to fear.

Accordingly, Armusia used the means which his new position in the eyes of all gave him, of persuading Panura, the Princess's favourite attendant, to give him secret access to Quisara's antechamber, on the evening of the day which has just been referred to, in relating the interview between Quisara and Piniero: and behold him now, waiting there, in deep but self-possessed anxiety, the arrival of the Princess, previously to her retirement to rest for the night.

At last she entered the chamber alone, and more beautiful (he thought) in a certain soft halo of sadness which seemed to breathe around her, and emanate from all her form, as she moved slowly past where he stood unobserved, than when he had first beheld her, bright and beaming with a newly-awakened hope, at the thought

of her beloved brother's return; or, again, when that hope had merged in a passionate joy at its consummation. He gazed upon her for a moment in a speechless rapture, which seemed to steep his soul in a brief oblivion of all things but its sense of her beauty. Then, with a noble self-assurance, commanding all thoughts away from him but those which had led him to the bold and hazardous step he had taken, he immediately came forward, and presented himself before her.

On seeing him the Princess started, as if suddenly awakened from sleep; then, looking round her quickly, she seemed about to retire from the apartment. But, as if suddenly recollecting who and where she was, she drew herself up proudly where she stood, and casting upon Armusia a look of noble anger, addressed him thus:—

"What is this, Sir? How do I find you here?—and wherefore?—What strange audacity is this? Think you my brother's love and

favour will protect you in violating the sanctuary of his sister's chamber!"

"Lady!" exclaimed Armusia——

But she went on, as if without hearing him.

"Is it *thus* you show the humility of your love?—Is *this* the way you prove the duty you professed to me? Quit this place, instantly; I am mistress of myself, and will be so.—Leave me!"

"Lady," said Armusia, as she paused in her hurried speech, as if alarmed—"Lady, hear me calmly for a moment, and then I will obey you. Wrong not yourself by fears. The only peril of this meeting is to *me*, who have set my life and hopes upon the cast of it. Think if there is danger in my love, or if it is other than duteous and humble as you would have it, when it bids me say, that if you so will it, when I quit your gracious presence now, I will never enter it again. It is to prove my heart's humility, that I am here; it is to tax to the uttermost the duteous love I bear towards you—that, while it fills my heart

with fears, leaves it not hopeless till *you* bid it be so."

"What would you then?" said Quisara,—resuming in part, as Armusia spoke, the calm dignity and sweet repose of demeanour that were so finely correspondent with the character of her beauty—"and what should I think of finding you here, at this hour?"

"Think, Lady," replied Armusia, "that my love is dangerous only to myself, and that you are your own safety. Think that I come, only to complain once, and then be silent—nay, not to complain, but only to lament; only to grieve that your gracious bounty would seem to have forgotten, or to contemn, that which (I urge it not as a claim) you bad me do for you;—only a little to touch upon, not to accuse, the seeming scorn you put upon me;—only to remind you that it was by your commands I hoped to gain you, and therefore dared to love you;—only, in brief, to tell you that, (unworthy as I am) having once dared to love *you*,

I cannot love or wed any but you, or your memory."

As Armusia pronounced this speech,—which he did with an air of deep passion breathing through the fears which it expressed,—a look of grave pleasure gradually diffused itself over the features of Quisara; and when he ceased to speak, she said—

"This, Sir, is the way to beget the fair opinion I would fain have of you. I am ashamed of my fears, and see that they were vain. Let me say, too, that I confess your claims upon my gratitude, and respect the nobleness of your nature, that would set them at nought. But let me say, too——"

Then, suddenly pausing, she seemed to recollect something that she had till then forgotten. It cast a look of momentary confusion into her face; but the next instant she resumed her former calm demeanour, and added,—

"I should not doubt your truth, Sir,—nor do I: but we are strangers to each other. You

profess a fair obedience to my wishes. I would fain put it to present trial."

"I ask no other, Lady. Say what I should do."

"Look for no further favours now," replied Quisara; "forget the services you have done me—the dangers you past through to them—even the reward that is (I confess it) due to them;—forget even your love itself; and, remembering only the duteous observance which you say it prompts in you, leave all to me, and quit this place instantly."

Armusia, after a brief pause, bowed his head low, in token of obedience, and turned to depart, without even raising his looks towards Quisara, or uttering a single word in reply.

At this instant the door of the apartment opened, and Ruy Dias entered.

All three stood for a few moments fixed in silence. At length Ruy Dias, looking with an air of proud astonishment, first on Armusia, and

then on Quisara, said,—without however directly addressing himself to either,—

"Where am I? Are these the apartments of the Princess Quisara. And is it thus I find her privacy occupied?"

Seeing Armusia about to reply, Quisara said to him, with an air of calm dignity,—

"I claim your promise, Sir. Speak not, but leave this place at once. We shall meet again."

Armusia again bowed his head, in token of implicit obedience; and departed without a word, or without even looking again on either Quisara or Ruy Dias.

The door of the apartment had scarcely closed upon Armusia, when Ruy Dias turned to Quisara, with looks of ill-suppressed rage upon his countenance, and exclaimed, in a quick, loud voice,—

"Is this the trust that I must build my hopes upon? Are these the proofs of your

respect and favour? Is this the banquet I was bid to?"

"Ruy Dias,—beware!" exclaimed Quisara, endeavouring to interrupt him: but he continued, with increasing vehemence,—

"How came he here? Did you invite him? Was he brought here to brave me?" Then, altering his angry tone to one expressive of sarcastic insinuation, he added, "Or is it *I* who am the intruder? Perchance I came unlooked for,—before the time that I was bid, or wanted! If so, your negligent attendant must answer for it—who was not in waiting to stay me till I was welcome!"

"Ruy Dias!" said Quisara, in a tone and with a look that struck him dumb at once, and made him crouch backward and shrink within himself, as he heard and felt them,—"Ruy Dias,—I find you as much too bold where you should be humble, as you were slow and cautious where boldness would have become you. Who am I, that you dare thus to task my

thoughts and actions? Was it for this I graced and honoured you?—graced and honoured one who is an open shame to me—since others can *do* for me what he scarce dares to think of?"

"I am to blame, Lady,"exclaimed Ruy Dias, with an air of deep humility.

"You are indeed, Sir," interrupted she, with a relenting sadness mixed with the dignified anger that marked her countenance and manner. Then resuming all her noble scorn, she went on —"Weak that I was, and blind!—nay, worse—ungrateful and unjust!—a sound—a shape—the mere sign of a soldier and a lover! To hang my lingering hopes on these,—and let the loyal substance of them—the reality—stand by ungraced and slighted!"

"Lady," exclaimed Ruy Dias, imploringly, and sinking on his knee before her as he spoke, "I have been too bold. Pity and forgive me!"

"I scorn thee, and contemn thee!" exclaimed she. Then, casting a look upon him, in which

the feelings she had just expressed predominated, but in which there was mixed a lingering tenderness that seemed to stay there against her will, she passed by him where he knelt, and left the apartment without uttering another word.

Without venturing to inquire too curiously, as to what may have been the real views of Quisara, in regard to the proposition of Ruy Dias, made to her through Piniero, for getting rid of the claims of Armusia, we must here relate, that, instantly on her quitting the apartment, as we have above described, she despatched a messenger to Piniero, commanding him in the strongest terms to take no step in the business which had been the subject of their late conference, till she had again seen him, to consult further on the matter.

Chapter VIII.

We must now once more turn our attention to the crafty savage from whose hands Armusia had been the means of so nobly redeeming the captive King of Tidore.

Baffled as his views had been, and hopeless as he was of again compassing them now that they were fully exposed and known, he at once determined to abandon them, and seek revenge instead. To this end he carefully disguised himself, under the garb and aspect of a venerable priest of the worship universally prevalent in those islands, and having found the means of privately landing at Tidore, he presented himself before the King, as one possessed of secret know-

ledge vital to the interests of religion and the state.

The King, who had always shown a deep reverence for the priestly office, immediately admitted the seeming stranger to a private conference; during which his noble and unsuspecting nature became the ready dupe of the deep cunning which was opposed to it. The seeming priest, having first gained the King's confidence, by working on his piety towards the gods, and his earnest desire for the welfare of his people, began cautiously to approach his main design, which was, to instil into the King a belief that the Portuguese, who had so long possessed a footing in the islands, were now on the point of putting into execution a secret project which they had all along entertained, of gaining entire possession of the country, reducing the native inhabitants to subjection and slavery, and finally subverting the old worship, and substituting their own in its place.

In proof of all this, his ready invention

enabled him to relate various pretended facts, which he declared had come to his knowledge during a late religious pilgrimage he had made through the islands, and to the truth of which he pledged his priestly word, in the most solemn manner.

When he found that he had thus excited a deep interest and curiosity in the mind of the King, he ventured to approach a step nearer to his ultimate design, by hinting that it was in *his* island the attempt was first to be made, and that the time for making it was near at hand.

At last, when he thought he had sufficiently excited the fears as well as the confidence of the King, he ventured to hint that his late rescue from the hands of his enemy, the Chief of Ternata, was no other than a part of the deep designs entertained by these Portuguese; since, in giving to one of them the hand of Quisara, heir to the kingdom, it would place them at a pitch of power and influence which they could

not have hoped to compass so speedily by any other means.

At this insinuation, the noble nature of the King started,—and he looked with a penetrating glance at the seeming priest. But the countenance of the latter exhibited no evidence of the deceit he was practising. On the contrary, seeing at once, from the look and manner of the King, the danger of pressing this point too strongly at first, he begged him to suspend his opinion upon it for the present, till he should receive such proofs, either for or against a belief in it, as should make doubt impossible. He then, with a view to let what he said had make its due impression upon the mind of the King, proposed to take his leave at once, and not solicit his further attention to the subject of their conference, till he could confirm what he had said by further and more decisive proofs. He begged, however, in the meantime, to be allowed a brief interview with the Princess; not, as he said, to disclose to her the supposed

designs of the Portuguese, (that he left to the better wisdom and discretion of the King, either to give or to withhold, as he might see fit,) but merely to offer her holy counsel, in his character of pilgrim and priest.

Having thus in some degree shaken the confidence which the King had hitherto felt in Armusia, the Chief of Ternata proceeded to visit Quisara,—without whose involuntary aid he saw that it would be impossible for him to prosecute his insidious and deep-laid designs of vengeance.

The Princess received him in a manner, the precise interpretation of which set all his cunning at defiance. He felt assured that she did not penetrate his disguise, or suspect him to be other than he seemed. But she showed none of that profound reverence for his pretended office, which her universal character for piety to their gods had led him to expect;—though there was nothing in her manner in the least degree opposed to that character. What he most remarked, and

what called up a secret fear within him as he observed it, was the still, scrutinising, and thoughtful air with which she listened to all he said, and above all, to that which related to the imputed designs of Armusia, to change the religious worship of the island.

The Princess heard him for a long time attentively, but without uttering a word in reply, or affording the slightest indications by which he might gather what were the nature of her feelings in regard to his communications. At length, in order to prepare the means of at once convincing both her and the King of the imputed views of Armusia, he proposed that she should appoint a meeting with the young Portuguese, during which she should hint at the necessity of his abandoning *his* religious belief, and accepting *hers*, as an indispensable and understood condition of her fulfilling his claims upon her, as the rescuer of her brother. This proposal the insidious chief did not doubt of the Princess acceding to, on account of her known

preference for Ruy Dias, and the occasion that might thus be afforded her, of getting rid of those claims which were at present so fatally opposed to her love.

Whatever were the views and feelings of the Princess on this proposal of the seeming priest, it was no sooner named than her looks changed, from a meditative and inexpressive stillness, to a solemn animation, which lighted up her eyes, lifted and brightened her smooth brow, and seemed to pass through and pervade all her frame. She rose from her seat—signified her intention of immediately doing what the seeming priest had proposed—and then desired to be alone:—and the wily but shallow savage left her, fully convinced that at last he had hit upon the right means of furthering his deep designs.

He now, by unremitting watchfulness, aided by the influence which his assumed character gave him, contrived to learn the exact time and place of the meeting which Quisara almost immediately after his departure appointed with

Armusia; and then he proceeded to apprise the King of it, (studiously concealing from him its precise object,) and engaged him to be at hand secretly; assuring him that he would not fail to meet with sufficient proofs of the imputed views and sentiments of Armusia:—for he shrewdly enough reckoned, that the tried and approved piety of the young Portuguese would take alarm at the proposal of Quisara, and that he would not fail to utter something, touching their island gods, which might be turned to the desired account.

Chapter IX.

On the morning after Quisara's late indignant dismission of Ruy Dias, (the same on which Quisara and the disguised Chief of Ternata met, as just described,) his blood at last seemed to rouse and assert itself; and filled and fired with shame and rage, he sought his nephew Piniero, and communicated to him what had passed on the preceding night; and he added his fixed determination to try at once his fortunes, either by fair means or foul, against this hated rival to all his hopes, both in ambition and in love.

"Let it be by *fair* means, good uncle," said Piniero, "and I am yours to be commanded, even against the man whose noble spirit I love

and honour. But for the *foul* ones that you talk of, you must find some other hand to help them on, than his whose owner loves you too well to let you do an evil thing that he can hinder. And did you really," continued he, "know your own work in me so little, as to think that a word or a wish (even of yours) could turn it into nothing?—nay, into its worst opposite?—Briefly and honestly, uncle,—I seemed to do your hateful purposes against Armusia, only that I might undermine and mar them—finding, as I did, that a woman's wit was set upon them too: for else I had not feared but your own honourable nature had grown to hate them before they grew into acts. But now, the lady's conscience (caprice, some spell it) is as eager to have them stayed, as yesterday she was to urge them on. She has slept upon them: and women change their minds every time they change their head-gear. But no more of this!" added he, seeing that what he said had thrown Ruy Dias into a mood of silent thought, the

tone of which might mar Piniero's design of calling him back to honour and himself—"No more of this!—You seemed to hint at an honest mode at least—albeit a something silly one—of settling the matter. You cannot both possess the lady; and doubtless both of you love her much too well to think of letting her make her own choice between you!—So woo her like soldiers, at least—fight for her—win her. To tell you the truth, uncle, I shrewdly suspect you have no other chance of wearing her. She's a gallant dame after all—and will love *him* best, and only, who best deserves her. Tilt for her, then—and in her very presence too. There's the fairest spot in the island for it, just in front of her chamber window. And for your adversary, I'll be sworn *he* will not baulk your humour. Come—pen him a handsome invitation to the sport; and I'll bear it to him upon the point of my sword. And if I do not see fair play between you, say I love my uncle better than my honesty."

Thus the gay but noble-hearted Piniero ran on, in seeming want of thought, but in reality deeply anxious to recal Ruy Dias to that high sense of honour from which a soul-softening passion had for a while shaken him.

Ruy Dias remained fixed in inward thought, for some moments after Piniero had ceased to speak—his brow contracted—his hand (on which he leaned as he sat) pressed upon his nether lip, and his eyes fixed upon the ground. At last, without replying a word to what Piniero had said, and as if unconscious of having heard it, his brow suddenly cleared, he rose from his seat, and taking his nephew by the hand, addressed him thus:—

"Piniero, I have thought of what we talked of yesterday—and it must not be. It were unworthy both of us. Armusia is a soldier, and a brave one—and should die by daylight, and upon a soldier's sword. Go to him; tell him of his presumption in seeking the Princess, and of *my* previous claims upon her; and bid him either

give up his quest, or answer it upon the instant. There is a spot in front of the palace, fitted in all things to our purpose. In an hour I shall look for him there—either alone, or attended by one follower only. Go—and bring me his reply."

"Why, aye!" exclaimed Piniero, "this is something like! this is the talk of a Portugal, and a soldier!—Stir not hence, good uncle, till I return—and be sure your honest wishes shall not long want an honest reply."

Briefly,—Piniero sought and speedily found Armusia; it required but few words to settle the meeting; and the parties reached the appointed spot just as Quisara had sent a messenger in search of Armusia, to desire his attendance upon her at a certain time and place, as suggested by the seeming priest.

The Princess was sitting alone at her window, thinking deeply of the coming meeting with Armusia, and its results, when she saw at a little distance three persons approaching the

palace. At length they stopped at a spot within the garden boundaries, secluded from public view, and overlooked only by the windows of her own apartments; and she perceived that they were Ruy Dias, Armusia, and Piniero,—and that all were armed.

The first impulse of Quisara was a momentary one, of indistinct and tumultuous fear; for it was evident that the purposes of the meeting were hostile. She had scarcely collected her thoughts, with a view to determine on the course she should pursue, when she saw Ruy Dias and Armusia standing opposed to each other for combat; while Piniero retired to some distance, as if to wait the event. Suddenly, a secret thought seemed to come to her, which, if it did not still her fears, stayed all outward evidence of them; and she stood intently watching the persons before her.

They commenced the combat; and the very first movements of it showed that the parties were stirred by very different feelings towards

each other; for while Ruy Dias assailed his adversary with an eager and impatient rage, which evidently impaired his otherwise perfect skill, Armusia seemed to act upon the defensive only, and with a cool and stedfast self-possession which gave him immeasurable advantages over his opponent, especially as his skill was no less perfect than that of Ruy Dias.

Presently, Ruy Dias, in his ungoverned haste, slipped on one knee, and had nearly lost his sword, and fallen to the ground. This accident, —of which Armusia did not seem to take the advantage that he might,—roused Ruy Dias to additional fury, and he rushed upon his adversary, with a despairing eagerness, which made it evident to Quisara that, now at least, the life of one or other was in immediate danger; and she was on the point of interfering, when, the next instant, she saw Ruy Dias stretched upon the ground, disarmed, and Armusia standing over him, with a noble anger burning in his cheek and eyes, and as if about to end, in the only way

that was left him, an enmity which his forbearance had seemed to increase, rather than appease. At this instant, Quisara threw open the casements of her chamber; and exclaimed, in a voice of mingled command and entreaty,—

"Armusia, hold!—forbear!—for my sake spare him!—I ask it of your professed love for me."

Armusia looked up to where the voice came from; and, in a moment, the anger that glowed in his face passed away, and a calm, pale sadness took its place; the uplifted sword fell (not involuntarily) from his hand; and he retired a few steps from the fallen Ruy Dias, and continuing to look fervently up towards Quisara, said,—

"You cannot bid me do the thing, Lady, that I will not—if honour do not forbid it. Knowing that you love him," continued he,—looking down for an instant at Ruy Dias, who still lay upon the ground, with his face buried in his hands,—"Knowing that you love him, it had not come to this, but that my own life and

honour were at stake. Is there ought else you would command me, Lady?"

"I would confer with you," replied she; "my messenger is seeking you. I would see you, alone, here at the palace, in an hour."

She then immediately closed the window, and retired from view.

Meanwhile Piniero, half-angry, half-delighted, at this unlooked-for close of the combat, had come forward; and as the Princess disappeared from the window, he exclaimed,—

"S'death!—there's no keeping these women's tongues out of anything. They had rather do good with them, than do nothing. Now is here as pretty a piece of fighting as need be, marred in the very middle of it, and by the very she that set it on! And—to confess an undutiful truth—just as the best man of the two had got the best of it. Why, uncle," he continued,—stooping down to Ruy Dias, who still lay with his face on the ground,—"has a woman's tongue whistled away the life that it was moved to save? If so, she had better have held it,

and let a gentleman and a soldier die as he ought, —upon a less dangerous and dexterous weapon. Or has a short fighting-bout so fatigued you, that you must needs sleep after it, to refresh you for the next? Come! here's your noble adversary—a noble one he is, uncle—worth any honest man's fighting with—he's waiting till you are pleased to attend him elsewhere. I wonder what peace-loving devil it was that possessed us, to come *here* to fight: though I thought she was bred of a fighting family, and loved the sport too well to spoil it."

Piniero was fain to stop his glib tongue, and look with real grief upon Ruy Dias, as the latter now rose from where he lay, and showed a countenance filled with an expression of the most bitter anguish.

"Oh!" exclaimed he, in a deep, hollow voice, that shook with inward emotion, which he did not seek to suppress, "Oh! I am lost, Piniero—lost, lost, lost!—I see that she contemns me. I am ashamed, dishonoured, lost!"

"Why, you are fairly beaten, uncle," said

Piniero, "if *that* includes all the ills you talk of; which I do not see, considering that (with reverence to kin be it spoken) the beater is a better man than the beaten! But if the lady contemns you, (as you seem to think,) she has taken a true woman's way of showing it. At any rate you are luckier in her hate than her love—for it has saved your life."

"Oh, I am lost!" resumed Ruy Dias, not noticing Piniero's free talk, which nothing could stop for long together.

"If you think, Sir," said Armusia, advancing towards Ruy Dias with an air of frank composure, "that you have lost any honour by a meeting ending as this must, you wrong both yourself and me. I would fainer (as your friend here knows) have offered my hand and sword in your service, than against you. But he would have it otherwise. I would so offer them still, but that I know not what chance seems to have made them hateful to you. At least let me say, (and I will, when you please

to bid me, say it to all the world, and hold him my enemy who doubts it,) that it was I, not you, who withdrew from this combat, and will never again meet my opposite in it, unless as a friend. I would ask to meet him as one now, if his anger (which I have not deserved) will let me:" and he held out his hand to Ruy Dias, who, after a momentary struggle which seemed to shake his whole frame, took it without uttering a word, or lifting his head from the dejected posture in which it had hung motionless since he last spoke.

Finding that neither Ruy Dias nor his friend spoke, (for the usual loquacity of Piniero did not on this occasion aid him in getting rid of the burst of honest feeling which he was somewhat awkwardly struggling to suppress,) Armusia continued:—

"Must we, because we would worthily love the same lady, hate each other? I have ever heard Ruy Dias held as the soul of honour; and had I earlier known his love for the Princess

Quisara, I had not sought to do that which herself declared should alone win her. But having done it; and having, in doing it, lighted up a love within me which, else, I had not dared to think of; I dare as little despair, till *she* bids me do so. To my thinking, then, our love should make us friends, rather than foes; since, if we love her as such a lady should be loved, it is for *her* good, not our own. Above all, Ruy Dias, weigh not at a feather my (so-called) claims upon her. The very naming of them, more that cancels them. I would win Quisara by her own free love, or lose her; for her love, and that alone, can so illustrate him on whom it falls, that he must in some sort feel himself lifted to her high level. Let us then be rivals in our humble duty alone; and, (by my hopes of her high love!) if it should fall on *you*, I will (if for *that* alone) honour you next only to herself. Once more let me say," continued Armusia after a pause, "I would fain

know Ruy Dias as a friend, but can never again know him as an adversary."

He then held forth his hand as he was motioning to depart, and it was silently seized by Ruy Dias, and pressed to lips that trembled with mingled emotions of remorse and admiration, and wetted by tears that now for the first time rose to Ruy Dias's eyes, and seemed to clear them from the mists of passion that had lately distorted all things around him.

"I may live to requite this noble bearing," said he.

"Do, and be yourself!" exclaimed Piniero: and Armusia departed, leaving the uncle and nephew to their own thoughts, and pursuing his way to prepare for the meeting with Quisara.

Chapter X.

Armusia and Quisara met in an outer chamber of the Princess's apartments, to which there was an ante-room, where the wily Chief of Ternata, under his seeming character of priest, had (not without much difficulty) persuaded the King to accompany him at the hour appointed for the meeting, and where they could overhear much, but not the whole, of what passed.

Quisara was the first to speak. Advancing towards Armusia as he entered, she presented her hand to him, with a look of frank pleasure in her countenance, not unaccompanied by a slight embarrassment of manner, which, however, soon passed away.

"I would fain thank you, Sir," said she, "and, if I could, requite you, for the noble love you have shown towards me. It was to do the first that I invited you hither. For the requital, I know not how I can offer it,—since you have made me think it is my love alone that *can* requite you; and *that*, as you have doubtless ere this conjectured, has been at least proffered to another. Let me say, however, that it was proffered only as the price of a worthiness which it did not find; and that (if I know myself) it is still mine to bestow. Thus much was due from me, both to you and to myself. I have heard," continued she, after a brief pause, and perceiving that Armusia did not offer to speak—"I have heard that, in your country, women are won by lip-worship and by looks; that he alone is deemed worthy of them, who can see nothing worthy but in her he seeks; and that to sue and sigh for their favour, is to deserve and gain it. I know not what manner of love this may be, or how those use and value it

who so achieve it: but to my thinking, that which can rest on air must be lighter than the air it rests on, and as variable."

She paused; and Armusia, who was gazing upon her in rapt silence, as soon as he seemed to lose the sound of her voice, exclaimed passionately,—

"Oh, speak on, Lady! Speak on for ever, that I may gaze and listen! I know not whither your discourse would lead me; but as my ears drink in its eloquent music, I feel high hopes spring up to life within me; filling me with thoughts that I should fear to utter. Oh, speak on!"

"I said," resumed she, "that I have heard your Portugal ladies love men for loving *them*. True this is a condition wanting which a woman's love should not, nay, cannot, grow into strength and perfectness. But as little can it live, nourished on this alone. At least it is thus with mine. I loved Ruy Dias for what I thought him; not because he loved me. Not

finding him what I thought, he and his love are become as nothing to me."

Pausing for a moment, her voice took a tone of mingled tenderness and solemnity, as she thus resumed,—

"Now, Armusia, hear me!—What I looked for in another, I seem to have found in you—found it in him to whom (putting all other claims aside) my gratitude no less than my vow had bound me, till his own noble nature released the bond: in this as wise as noble. I have found you all that I hoped to find; I think you, all that a woman's thoughts—a woman and a princess—would have in him she loves;—I *think* you this; one trial more may *prove* it."

"Name it, Lady," exclaimed Armusia eagerly, "name it! and if it stand within the compass of my will and power, believe it done."

"Be not precipitate," said Quisara, gravely,—and pausing, as if hesitating and lingering about her thoughts before she could put them into words. "What I shall ask of you is not a deed

that hands or swords can do. The immortal mind—the soul alone can act it. Let that but will it, and it is done."

"Then is it surely done," exclaimed Armusia fervently. "Had it been a deed for the weak body to do, I might have feared or doubted."

As Quisara still paused, he continued, "Speak, Lady, and have your will performed; for my high love (I may now name it without offence) has so lifted up the soul on which it has descended, that I feel a power within it prompting to thoughts which else it never could have compassed."

A less impassioned and self-occupied spectator than Armusia, might have observed and wondered at the increasing embarrassment that now grew upon Quisara, as she approached more nearly to the subject of her thoughts. She looked upon Armusia as if she would penetrate his very soul, though she knew that her next words would lay it open at once to her view; and she seemed to shrink from uttering those words,

lest they might scatter into air, instead of change into reality, the imaginary fabric of bliss on which she had built her new hopes. Once or twice she seemed on the point of abandoning her design of trying Armusia further. At length, after looking upon him steadfastly for some moments, she exclaimed, in a tone of impassioned fervour which had not hitherto accompanied her words,—

"Briefly, Armusia, he whom I love must be as *one* with me—one in all things—but most of all in mind, and that which springs from it and dwells in it. He must be one with me in thought and wish and will—in hopes and fears; else I can never wed him: I dare not, and I will not." Here she paused for a moment, and then added,—"This, then, is what I ask of you:—Give up your country's gods,—renounce their worship,—abjure the fearful power they hold over you;—and own the sway of mine."

At first, Armusia seemed confounded and struck dumb by these words; and he stood

gazing upon Quisara, with looks of doubt and inquiry, in which a feeling of vague terror was mingled—as if he had been communing with a seeming angel, who had suddenly changed before his face into an apparent demon. Then, seeming to recall his late thoughts, and recover his former state of feeling, he motioned as if shaking off some besetting trouble, and exclaimed with a forced smile,—

"Oh! I see,—you do but try me, Lady. You would not have me do this thing—the bare thought of which strikes a cold terror through me. Say that you would not—that you did but speak these words, to try the value of my faith; knowing that he who could be false to his God, could not be true to anything—not even to a love like mine for you. Say this, I beseech you,—and in saying it, lift the load of fear from off my heart, which your words have flung upon it."

A hurried smile, as if of pleasure—which she seemed anxious to suppress—passed across the

face of Quisara, as Armusia spoke thus; but there was no apparent correspondence with it in her reply:

"Armusia," said she, "I repeat, he whom I love and wed must be of one faith with me."

"Then be thou a Christian!" exclaimed he, fervently; then, looking up to heaven, with lifted hands, and an expression in which piety and human passion were mingled, he added,—"Oh! if that could be, I were blessed indeed!"

Quisara, without seeming to notice his words, continued,—

"Again, I ask,—can you bow down before our island altars? Worship our gods? Join in our rites and ceremonies? Honour our priests, and——"

"No more," interrupted Armusia; "I dare not even hear such words;—to have listened to them twice is an impiety at which my flesh trembles—what were it then to act them?"

Then, as if the thoughts which accompanied

these last words had worked up his feelings to a paroxysm of pious rage, which even the presence in which he stood could not controul, he added,—

"Your gods? what are they but stocks and stones? or, at best, unconscious creatures, made for man's use and pleasure, not his worship? Your altars? Do they not reek with innocent blood? Your rites and ceremonies? Impious and senseless mockeries! Your priests? Cunning impostors, that feed and fatten on the lies they utter, and laugh at those who trust them! Honour these? Forsake my faith—the Christian's faith—for these?"

Here the concealed King could scarcely restrain himself from coming forward, and interrupting the scene to which he had been induced to listen—thinking that by so doing he might prevent Armusia from proceeding farther in his rage against their gods. But his crafty companion, seeing that enough had not yet been uttered to justify violent measures against Armusia, used the influence which his priestly

seeming gave him, to prevent the King from disclosing himself.

Meanwhile Armusia, seeming suddenly to fall, from the height of his rage, into a feeling of fearful self-abasement, went on, as if meditating within himself;—

"Whither have I been wandering? On the edge of what an imminent precipice do I stand? Love her *this* way?—this most destroying way? Barter my soul for her?—Is it for this, then, that my hopes have been lifted up to heaven—only to be cast down again lower than the earth I tread on?——"

"Armusia," said Quisara, as he paused,—an anxious pleasure filling her countenance as she spoke—"Armusia, you said you loved me, and bade me name what I would have you do to make us one. It is by having one faith that alone we can be one."

"Let me hear no more!" exclaimed he. "Sorrow and shame strike inward to my heart, and make it tremble, at the very sound of your dangerous

voice—much more at the hateful words it utters. And when I look upon your beauty, a demon light seems to encompass it, that, if I gaze on it longer, may lead me on to ruin. Farewell!—I dare not stay with you—nor would I—for my love is changing, as I speak, into a strange fear, that troubles and oppresses me. Farewell! But let me not go without proclaiming aloud—as I would if your whole island heard me—the hatred that I feel for the impious mockeries to which you would entice me. Know that I spurn at your puppet gods—contemn their power—despise their juggling priests, and loathe their sacrifices, Nay—I must tell you, Lady—thoughts are stirring in me even now, which prompt me to overturn your blood-stained altar, —pull down your deities from their painted seats, and cast them into the dust from which they are moulded—and, rasing their polluted temples to the ground, plant on their ruins the holy cross of Christ. Once more farewell!—farewell for ever!"

"Stay!" exclaimed the seeming priest, coming forward from the inner chamber, preceded by the King. "Stay!—think not your impious threatenings against our gods and worship have passed unheard by those whose duty it is to mark and punish them."

Saying this, he hurried from the chamber, as if seeking some one without; while the King, addressing himself mildly to Armusia, endeavoured to remonstrate with him on what he had heard. But Armusia seemed only moved to a more uncontrollable anger, at finding that his interview with Quisara had been watched, and his words listened to. A sudden suspicion seemed to come across him, that the whole affair had been so contrived, to entrap him to his destruction; and the feeling gave new life and vigour to the noble rage that possessed him. Instead, therefore, of listening to the friendly words and wishes of the King, he only gave loose the more unrestrainedly to the various feelings that were at work within him; and when

the seeming priest returned with the guards which he had been seeking, he found Armusia exclaiming more fervently than ever against the pretended faith that could teach and countenance the base treachery of which he conceived himself to be the victim.

Even the King himself was moved to a sort of vague and superstitious terror at his words; and his cunning and watchful enemy, seeing the effect they had produced, took advantage of the moment, and hurried away the guards with their prisoner.

Meantime, the appearance and conduct of Quisara during this crisis would have been utterly inexplicable to those who were present, even if they had not been too fully absorbed in their own feelings to observe it. She seemed scarcely moved even to surprise, at the unexpected entrance of the King; and when she saw who it was that accompanied him, a sudden thought seemed to shoot across her mind, which lighted her face with a look of quick and eage

inquiry. Then, without uttering a word, she in a moment resumed her wonted composure, and appeared to withdraw her thoughts from all outward things, and concentrate them within her: and during the rest of the scene she stood silent and self-absorbed, and at the conclusion of it retired to her inner apartment, and permitted the seeming priest to withdraw with the King, as if she took no part or interest in their future purposes.

Chapter XI.

The news of Armusia's imprisonment soon spread through the island; and at first it created a feeling of indignant surprise, even in the natives themselves, proportioned to the gratitude they had felt towards him for the rescue of their beloved King. But among his countrymen, the Portuguese, it instantly called forth a fiery anger, that threatened to blaze out at once into open rebellion against the King.

Piniero was among the first who heard of it; and it stirred up afresh those feelings within him which sprung from the late disgrace of his uncle, Ruy Dias. "Now," thought he to himself (and as usual he put his thoughts into

audible words) — "Now does Fortune give this foolish uncle of mine one more chance than he deserves, of wiping away the unseemly soil this precious love of his has stuck upon his honour; —for there it does stick, though all the world but he and I are blind to it. I thought what would come of doing good to these graceless savages. As if anybody bred out of Europe could know the difference between a benefit and an injury—when (to say truth) only one in a hundred of those bred in it do so! And yet I could not swear that this same heroic Portugal deserves much better than he has met with,—for letting his wit and courage work out such a fool's errand. No wonder she jilted him for his pains:—as if a woman—not to say a Princess—would be expected to pay a man in any other coin, for taking her at her word, when she pretended a wish to lay down a sceptre that Fortune had just placed in her hands! Once give them supreme sway—though it be but over a mouse-trap—and beware what ground you tread on, if

they do but suspect you of a wish to curtail them in it. No—if Armusia had done nothing more worthy of a Portugal, a soldier, and a gentleman, than risk his own and his friends' lives in letting loose a cunning savage, who had been caught and caged by another still more cunning, he might have knocked long enough at his prison door for his pains, before Piniero had stepped aside to open it. But his noble bearing yesterday, bespeaks him one who must not be left in the mire of a malicious fortune, while honest men are at hand to help him out of it. And yet," continued he, after considering for a few moments, "there is but one who *can* so help him; and he (to the shame of my blood be it said) is no miracle of honesty—if indeed (which I would not swear) he is not himself at the bottom of the plot. But no," added he more gravely, "it cannot be. It must be tried, however; and I see the way."

Piniero immediately proceeded towards the spot where he expected to find Ruy Dias; they

presently met; and the result of their conference will be gathered from the sequel.

Meanwhile the day closed, leaving the King utterly undecided as to the course he should adopt with respect to Armusia. His disguised enemy, the Chief of Ternata, had hourly gained more and more influence over him, through the medium of his strong religious feelings; while his gratitude towards Armusia seemed to grow in strength, the more imperatively he seemed called upon to take measures against the avowal he had lately heard, and which, apparently, confirmed from Armusia's own lips all that he had been told, as to his dangerous designs.

At length, on the morning of the day after Armusia's committal to prison, the King determined on seeing him once more, and leaving no means untried of at least satisfying himself as to the real views and feelings of Armusia; while the Chief of Ternata, finding that he could not turn the King from this design, or by any arguments induce him to take violent measures against

Armusia without further deliberation, persuaded him to let the meeting take place in the hall of the palace—thinking that Armusia might be led to repeat publicly his late insults upon their gods and temples, and thus excite the people to join in the call for vengeance against him, which the priests, on the report of their seeming brother, had already raised and re-echoed throughout the island.

Accordingly, the audience was formally announced; and the Princess (who had not quitted her apartments since the meeting of the preceding evening) was desired by the King to attend it;—for he thought that, through her influence, Armusia might at least be induced to assist in appeasing the rage which the priests were everywhere expressing against him, and which they already accompanied by an undisguised call for his death, in the name and on the behalf of their insulted gods.

When all things were prepared for the reception of Armusia, he was brought from the

prison to which he had been conducted on the preceding day; and he entered the hall of audience at the same moment with Quisara and her attendants.

The looks and bearing of Quisara and Armusia, indicated that the feelings which were stirring within them, and which were to direct their conduct during this most trying moment of their lives, were altogether different in their nature; though in each they were equally active, intense, and self-absorbed.

Of Armusia, a settled melancholy seemed to have taken possession, which, on his first entering, bent his eyes to the ground, and spread its pale still hue over all his countenance. Mixed with it, too, there was an occasional restlessness of manner, which seemed to indicate a sense of the imminent peril in which he had placed himself, and the utter inefficacy of his own unassisted powers to escape from it. But above all, there was a look of high and calm resolve seated upon his brow, and settled as if for ever within

his eyes, which seemed to show that no doubtful misgivings, or feeble self-questionings, had induced him for an instant to balance or debate within himself, as to the course he should pursue; but that, on the contrary, knowing of a surety what his duty and his honour required of him, *that* he was prepared to do, as if it were a thing fated and fixed, and not even capable of happening otherwise.

The bearing of Quisara was altogether different. A lofty and solemn, yet mysterious and undefined pleasure looked forth from her eyes as she entered; while an expression of something like proud exultation spread itself over all her features, and gave an air of more than ordinary elevation to her stately and steadfast gait,—seeming to bespeak thoughts and feelings of a new and more noble character than she had hitherto entertained. Yet, interfused through all these, there was her usual tone of soft and feminine tenderness,—which was increased, rather than impaired, by a doubtful

look, as if the new hopes that had come to her were not unalloyed by fearful forbodings as to the events which were at hand. On entering the hall she proceeded at once towards the King,—looking neither to the right hand nor the left but seating herself beside him, with a calm self-collected air, as if she was come thither as a judge of what was about to take place, rather than one deeply concerned in it.

The report of Armusia's imprisonment, and the cause of it, having spread through the island, and everywhere excited feelings of interest and curiosity, the present meeting took the character of a public trial, which all were anxious to witness, whose stations gave them access to the palace. It was observable, however, not without surprise, that Ruy Dias and Piniero, as well as the immediate friends of Armusia, were absent.

As soon as the Princess had taken her place in the hall, and some words had passed (aside) between the King and the seeming priest who

stood near him, the former addressed Armusia thus,—

"Let me not scruple, Portugal, to avow, thus publicly, that I owe to you more than my life. I owe to you that liberty to use my life in the service of my people, without which life itself were as nothing to me. It is a heavy debt you have laid upon me; and I feel it doubly heavy now that you have compelled me to weigh it against that duty to my people which is still more sacred, in a king, than that of gratitude itself. I would fain reconcile these duties. Teach me to do so, by telling me that the fearful words I lately heard you utter were *words* only, or that I mistook their import."

"King," exclaimed the seeming priest, taking advantage of a momentary pause, "this may not be. Pardon the seeming boldness of one who dares not be lukewarm in the cause of those powers to which Kings themselves owe their allegiance. It is in their name I speak, it is their will I utter, in declaring this Por-

tugal's life a forfeit to their just anger, and that they who would seek to shield him from their vengeance, must look to feel it upon their own heads."

There was a murmur of excited feeling heard throughout the hall as he spoke.

"You bid this Christian," continued he, "unsay the daring impieties that he uttered, thinking them unheard, except by ears that he would fain have corrupted by them;—you ask him to disavow designs which doubtless our gods themselves prompted him to confess, and aided me, their humble instrument, to penetrate and unmask. Think you he will be slow to do this, if in doing it he gains one step towards his impious wishes? Rather let the Princess, towards whom his seemingly mad avowals were directed, declare his purpose in making them, and so remove from her own head the displeasure which our offended gods must feel, against any one,—even herself,—who could silently listen to them. I call upon her, in the name of those

gods, to bear witness against this man;—and having heard her testimony,—which cannot but confirm what we ourselves have listened to,—I once more adjure you, O King, to appease the outraged powers who preserve and protect us, by pronouncing the present death of this Portugal."

Speaking thus, he turned towards the Princess, with half-veiled eyes, betokening a sly distrust as to the effect of his words;—for he had all along been perplexed by her manner towards him, since his disguise had enabled him to communicate with her, and still more by the unaccountable silence she had hitherto preserved, in regard to the scene of the preceding evening.

Quisara cast a penetrating look towards him, as he appealed to her; and then, turning towards Armusia, and looking steadfastly upon him for a few moments, she at length said,—

"Let Armusia himself speak, and let him be judged by his own words. What he uttered yesterday should, in justice, pass as if unsaid;—

since it was heard by an unworthy stratagem, and was moreover (let me not scruple to say it) wrung from him by thoughts and feelings, which would have had no existence, but for his own free and generous abandonment of his claims upon me, as liberator of my royal brother. Let Armusia pause before he speaks," continued she, still looking at him steadfastly, and with a deep meaning in her looks, "and weigh well the peril that awaits him: and let him still bear in mind, that Quisara's word is sacred, and that the hour which sees him of one Faith with her, also sees him (if he so wills) her lord and husband—the honoured husband of as humble and duteous a wife as if he had wed the poorest and meanest in the land. Let him pause and balance, and then speak."

Immediately Quisara ceased to speak, Armusia replied, in a slow and subdued, but calm, firm, and self-possessed voice.

"I need not pause, Lady—for I dare not balance. Your words shake my heart, as the

thunder shakes the deep-founded rock—they shake, but cannot move it. What I have said, is said. If I do not repeat it, it is not that I fear to do so; but that what I uttered yesterday was spoken in passion and in anger; and such words come ill from calm lips. The Christian's faith, if held aright, teaches him to confide humbly for himself,—not to exult proudly over others; its truth springs not from the errors of other faiths—its purity and power dwell not in *their* foulness and weakness. What more need I say?" continued he, after a pause.—"For my life, it is less than nothing to me, now that the hopes on which it hung are broken. I would scarce stir my hand to save it." Then, addressing himself still more directly towards the Princess, and looking at her with a tender sadness which seemed, as he yielded himself up to it, to fetch the tears into his eyes, he added,—"But let me say, Lady—had it been my lot to have won your high love, I would have worn it, as only a Christian can—in the

immediate sanctuary of my soul—next only to that holier image round which my faith clings; and I would have sought to deserve it, as only it can be deserved—by teaching you to know and feel the beauties of that faith—by making you A CHRISTIAN."

"You *have* made me a Christian!" exclaimed Quisara, in a firm and solemn voice,—rising from her seat as she spake.

The whole assembly seemed moved at once to murmurs of eager surprise, as the Princess uttered these words; and both the King and the seeming priest were about to speak;—but she hushed all to an involuntary silence, by a stately motion of her head and hand; and then continued as follows,—

"Armusia, so far as they have sprung from me, your trials are at an end. I have proved you to the uttermost, and found you in all things what I would have you—above all, in this last. Your perfect love for me had before conquered my affections;—your Faith, as I have now beheld

it in its fruits, has won my reason and my soul. That must needs be true and noble, from which such truth and nobleness springs; and I will embrace and follow it, whithersoever it may lead me. Armusia, I am a Christian, and your wife, if you will make me such; and I will share whatever fate these blind and ungrateful men would fix on you; I swear it, by the new Power whose will I feel stirring within me."

As she paused, the King and his wily enemy (both of whom had hitherto been struck into a dumb astonishment at her words) turned to each other, with looks, the one of blank amazement, the other of hurried and restless disappointment. But the seeming priest perceived at once that his deep-laid plans of revenge were now on the point of being frustrated at least, if not exposed, unless he could take advantage of the superstitious terror which for the moment possessed the King, to hurry him on to some desperate measure, and then make his escape from the

island, during the confusion and trouble which the successful termination of his stratagems would cause. Without waiting, therefore, for the King to speak, he exclaimed,—

"Now, King,—was it a false danger that I prophesied? 'Tis as I feared. Had he not known this, he had not dared to utter, even to the Princess, the monstrous impieties which yesterday we heard from him. The shaft is plumed, which, if once sped, is fatal to our faith and worship. It must be broken, at whatever cost. King, they must *both* die! There is no other way. You know the influence the Princess holds over your people. The crisis is desperate. Once more I pronounce the will of our insulted gods, in saying that both their lives are forfeit. Let *him*," continued he,—pointing his finger towards Armusia, as if with a view the more forcibly to rouse the already excited indignation of the people present against him,—"Let *him* be led to immediate execution."

A shout of approving exultation burst from

the assembly as he spoke. Meantime, the King was utterly confounded and lost, amid the contending feelings that possessed him. A wild confusion looked forth from his eyes; and he seemed incapable of interfering, even by a word or motion, to prevent the insolent boldness of his concealed enemy from carrying his meditated vengeance into immediate effect.

At this instant, in the midst of the expectant silence that followed the shout of the assembly, a burst of artillery was heard at a distance without; and the next moment a messenger rushed into the hall, and making his way to the upper part, where the King sat, informed him that the Portugals had all retired into the fort which commanded the town, and had opened the batteries upon it, and that a messenger was at hand, bearing a communication from Ruy Dias.

The person alluded to almost immediately appeared at the entrance of the hall; and as soon as the agitated state of the assembly permitted silence to be obtained, he proclaimed his

errand aloud, to the effect that unless Armusia was within half an hour delivered safely into the hands of his friends and countrymen, they would lay the town in ashes.

The disguised Chief of Ternata, instead of being disconcerted by this news, conceived fresh hopes of success from it; for he thought that if he could but persuade the King to resist this bold attempt on the part of the Portugals to rescue their countryman, it might bring about even more mischief than he had looked for from the full success of his own stratagems; and, moreover, that he himself would be more secure of escape in the confusion that would ensue. He, therefore, immediately put to proof the whole strength of his lately acquired influence over the mind of the King, by endeavouring to persuade him, that he might safely treat the message of Ruy Dias with contempt; and that all he need do to recover possession of the power which he had so unfortunately trusted into the hands of these strangers, was, to temporize with them, by

means of mingled expectations and threatenings, as to the life of Armusia.

The King's mind (the character of which was gentleness and ductility, rather than strength and firmness) had been so entirely confounded and perplexed by the thoughts and feelings attendant on the events of the last twenty-four hours, that he seemed at last disposed to yield himself up blindly to the suggestions of his wily enemy; and the latter was on the point, in the King's name, of crowning the mischief he had brought about, by sending back Ruy Dias's messenger with marks of contempt and obloquy, —when a confusion of voices was heard at the entrance of the hall, as if some one was forcing his way through the crowd without; and the next moment Piniero was seen, making his way up the hall, towards the spot where the King and Princess were situated.

"Where is this same priest?" exclaimed he with a triumphant smile, as he kept making his hurried way through the crowd that impeded his

passage up the hall ;—"where is this reverend labourer in his vocation, of setting honest people together by the ears? Let him have a care how his own fare in the attempt!—Surely," continued he, as he approached the spot where the disguised Chief of Ternata stood, and looked at him more closely,—"surely some of us should know that face—fringed and furbelowed as it is since we saw it here a week ago, on as bold and impudent an errand as now, and one that was happily destined to end as unwelcomely!"

So saying, without another word he rushed suddenly upon the seeming priest, and tearing off his false beard, and forcing open his outer vestment, discovered the face and attire of the Chief of Ternata.

In an instant all hands and voices were raised against him; and it required the utmost exertions of Piniero, aided by the commands of the King himself, (whose good sense and self-possession seemed to return to him as if by magic at this disclosure,) to preserve him from the imme-

diate fury of the people present. The next moment saw him change places with the intended victim of his revenge, and abandon himself, in sullen silence, to the fate that awaited him.

Meanwhile, the feelings and thoughts of Armusia and Quisara seemed to glance for an instant at this new event, and then to turn towards each other, and settle there, into a deep and calm self-abandonment,—as if a sudden and unhoped-for movement of the sea of doubt and fear, at the mercy of which they had lately been floating hither and thither, had at last borne them at once into the haven of their hopes.

Referring back for a moment to the events which led to this happy consummation, it is only needful to relate, that Piniero, on inquiring into the circumstances connected with the imprisonment of Armusia, soon found that it had been brought about by the immediate intervention of the seeming priest who was newly arrived on the island, and of whom nobody could give any account. He learned also, from Panura,

the favourite attendant of the Princess, that the King himself was in no degree favourable to the measures taken against Armusia, but that they were hurried on without his commands, and almost against them, by the impudent boldness of this new confidant and adviser. Having now communicated with his uncle, Ruy Dias, and found that the noble bearing and conduct of Armusia the day before had recalled him to himself, and dispersed the blinding mists that passion had for a while spread before his mental vision, they consulted together on the best means of turning aside the peril that seemed to threaten Armusia; and the bold measure of closing the gates of the fort, and then demanding his immediate release, was determined on, and left to the execution of Ruy Dias. Piniero then renewed his inquiries respecting the proceedings of the seeming priest; and finding that he studiously avoided all direct intercourse with the priests of the land, a vague suspicion came across him, that treachery was at work. With

this clue to lead him, and the assistance of Panura in enabling him to watch every instant of the seeming priest's retirement when he left the private apartment of the King, Piniero soon satisfied himself that the object of his observation, whoever he was, was at least disguised for some sinister purpose. This was enough to determine Piniero in the course he should pursue, and the moment he should choose to complete his discovery. Its results we have just seen.

And now, it is scarcely needful to relate in detail the concluding events of our story; since those which have already been told sufficiently point out the course of them. It must be added, however, that Quisara's love for Armusia, springing as it did from the strength rather than the weakness of her character, now grew at once into that perfect esteem on which alone a permanent affection between man and woman can be founded; and it soon learned to blend itself sweetly with that pure faith of which it is the

nearest earthly type, and to the spirit of which it is closely allied.

As for Armusia,—the pious exaltation of mind which had been called forth in him by the perils that seemed to surround him, and the noble sacrifices that his truth and honour called upon and prompted him to make, speedily subsided into that calm and full contentment of spirit which waits on a fulfilled hope, and an accomplished purpose ;—while the new joy that sprang within him at the certain prospect of seeing her whom he loved of one faith with himself, gave an animation to his thoughts, which kept them from clinging with too voluptuous a softness to the bliss that awaited him.

Finally, the good King, delivered from the maze of doubts in which the malicious cunning of his enemy had contrived to entangle him, once more gave way to that gratitude towards Armusia which was the natural movement of his heart: and moreover, instead of being led, by

the late act of Ruy Dias and his friends, to withdraw his confidence from them, he did but seek occasion to show them new favour, as the instruments of saving him from the shame and sorrow of sacrificing, in a moment of temporary blindness, his deliverer and friend. Indeed, so fully did they grow in his esteem and confidence, after the union of Quisara with Armusia, that the latter was speedily enabled to realize, in the midst of peace and good-will, the thought which his pious anger had first bred within him, of planting the holy emblem of Christianity on spots which had for ages been polluted by altars raised by cunning and cupidity, upheld by ignorance and fear, and cemented by human blood.

After sundry acute and sagacious criticisms had been expended on the foregoing Tale, all of which we shall permit the reader to have the satisfaction of making for himself, the story-teller next in succession observed as follows:—

"Well,—for my part I will not say how well I think of your Tale itself; for fear you should say I am providing beforehand for the indulgence that my own will (for particular reasons) especially need. But I *will* say how entirely I applaud the course that both my precursors have adopted, of choosing subjects which have been previously used by the greatest writers;—for if I mistake not, the Tale we have just heard is founded on a play by one of the best of our old dramatists. The question is, whether my own adherence to the rule I so approve, has not led me to a vicious extreme: I am sure it has led me to a very dangerous one;—for I have not merely adopted a subject which has been used

for his most beautiful and best-known drama by the noblest as well as the best known of our dramatists after Shakespeare, but have, in the few instances where it suited my purpose, put his very language into the mouths of my characters.

"You smile at my audacity:—but it is, I'm afraid, that very questionable species of boldness which is sometimes born of sheer cowardice. The truth is simply this: I had determined on treating a theme which includes the highest elements of human passion; and when I came to those particular points at which the passion mounted the highest, I found that it necessarily took the form of *poetry:* meaning, by poetry, those thoughts, imaginations, and feelings, which 'voluntary move harmonious numbers'—that intense stretch and pitch of human passion, the attempt to express which in words, whether in the lowest of mankind or in the highest, almost invariably takes a *measured* form—a form more or less rhythmical—a form that the world has consented to call *verse.*

"And now—see my dilemma. I must either attempt to express in dramatic verse what the greatest master of such verse that ever lived except Shakespeare (for such is Fletcher, so far as regards mere beauty of expression, and sweetness and volubility of sound) had so expressed before me;—or, I must bring *his* verse into juxta-position with my own poor prose.

"I could not hesitate between the choice of evils; and I must bear the penalty of that choice. But you must do me the justice to believe, it was a choice I had no thought of incurring till it was too late to be avoided:—for I had set my heart upon the story in question—so strongly indeed, that the eloquent tirade of our friend (in which there is much truth, I confess) touching the demerits of Love, as a subject for moving the sympathy of the modern reader, could not deter me from adopting it."

THE FAITHFUL

AND THE

THE FAITHLESS.

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FAITHFUL AND THE FAITHLESS.

Chapter I.

Melantius, chief captain of the army of the King of Rhodes, had been absent from the court for many months, fighting successfully against the enemies of his country; and he had at length conquered from them a safe and honourable peace, and arrived at home on the day which witnessed the marriage of his young and noble friend, Amintor.

There existed between Melantius and Amintor an intimacy and friendship which are seldom found to grow up between two persons so different in age, habits, and occupation: for Melantius (now no longer young) had passed much of his life in camps, and was a true

soldier; quick to feel the slightest offence to his high pretensions; hot and implacable in his resentments; and no more of a courtier than his station about the person of the King necessarily made him:—while Amintor, still in the bloom of youth, had scarcely breathed any air but that of a palace and its precincts, and had imbibed therewith a pliant softness, both of sentiment and demeanour, which might seem to consort but ill with the steadfast plainness of manner, and uncompromising honour, of the gallant and high-born chief.

But even when a boy, Amintor had gained the countenance and favour of Melantius, by the ardent and admiring delight with which he had never failed to greet him, on his return from any of his numerous successful expeditions. And since Amintor had grown to manhood, his noble bearing under several of those trying events which occasionally agitate the court circle of an absolute King, had ripened the early liking of the rough soldier, into a

strict and settled feeling of personal regard and affection.

During the recent absence of Melantius with the army, Amintor had corresponded with him, and among other court news, told him of his love for the gentle Aspatia, only daughter of old Calianax, Governor of the citadel, and of his being accepted as her future husband. So that the tidings of the marriage of Amintor did not surprise Melantius; and he was pleased to hear of it, chiefly because he had not failed to perceive the variable character of the young lord's mind, and he believed that such a union would contribute, more than anything else could, to settle his friend's thoughts and views into that only course which *he* considered they could fitly and honourably occupy,—namely, the pursuit of military glory and renown.

We have said that Melantius arrived from the army on the very day of Amintor's marriage. He was standing in one of the halls of the

palace, listening to the greetings and congratulations of the courtiers on his return, and also to this piece of great court news, which at the moment occupied all their thoughts, and which even they, courtiers as they were, could not help mixing up with their professed delight at the still greater novelty, of the arrival of so distinguished and highly favoured a personage as they all felt Melantius to be;—when the beautiful Aspatia entered the hall alone, and was passing silently across it towards the opposite side.

Melantius immediately left the group of gay flutterers who had gathered round him, and went up to the maiden, with an air of mingled tenderness and homage which was not habitual with him, even in the presence of the highest and brightest of the court beauties, but which the touching gentleness and grace of Aspatia never failed to call forth where it existed, and to create where it did not, in all who addressed her. Besides which, he felt that he was addressing

the chosen wife of his own chosen friend, and on the day of her marriage,—that day on which a youthful maiden seems to bear about with her an atmosphere of mysterious sanctity which profane thoughts dare not approach, and which, to all *but* profane ones, communicates something of its own divine character.

Aspatia stopped when she saw Melantius coming towards her, and cast her (till then) steadfast eyes upon the ground. Melantius was not a very shrewd interpreter of ladies' looks; and even if he had been, there was a depth of feminine softness about the character of Aspatia, which gave something of a pathetic expression even to her most unpremeditated smiles; but which, when she did *not* smile, cast a shade of sweet sadness over her face, more touching, and even more capable of inspiring a grave joy into the heart of the beholder, than her smile itself. So that in the downcast look, the immoveable features, and the serene and self-involved air of Aspatia, Melantius did not

perceive anything peculiarly inappropriate to her character, of a new-made bride: though it did strike him as something inappropriate to that character, or at least inconsistent with the forms which attend it in the precincts of a court, that the bearer of it should be thus pacing an open hall of the palace, on the day of her nuptials.

Melantius, however, knew but little about these matters, and cared less; so he at once stepped up to the object of his attention,—who stood before him as still, and almost as pale, as a marble statute,—and after a short pause, he addressed her as follows:—

"Will the Lady Aspatia permit a rough soldier,—the friend of her lord, and who loves him with an affection that only mature age can feel, and extreme youth inspire,—will she permit him at once to thank her for the happiness she is about to confer, and congratulate her on that which she must receive, in this happy union? The lady Aspatia may believe Melantius when

he says, that even if the beauty and the virtues of his own sister, the bright Evadne, had been put in competition with those of her who now hears him, and the choice had been left to her brother's determination, Amintor would still have been, as he is now, the husband of Aspatia: for Melantius holds the ties of friendship to be more sacred than those of blood, and he believes that, as none but the noble Amintor was a fit mate for the gentle Aspatia, so none but *she* could have made *him* happy. May that union last as long as it continues a blessing; and may its fruits be a race of soldiers, such as I *now* hope to see their sire!"

During the first portion of this address Aspatia lifted up her eyes, and let them rest upon the face of Melantius, with an expression of half-indifferent inquiry. But when he named Amintor as her husband, the blood rushed into her hitherto pale cheeks, and she turned aside her head, and her whole frame shook where she stood.—The last phrase of his address seemed to

recall her to herself, and restore at once her wonted calmness. She lifted herself up to her full height; looked him in the face for a moment; and then said, with a firm but sad voice, which went to the heart of Melantius, he knew not why,—

"When Aspatia possessed the noble Amintor's love, she was only thankful for it, not *proud* of it; she does not, therefore, deserve the Lord Melantius' irony and scorn, for having lost it."

Saying this, she passed across the hall, and disappeared; leaving Melantius in no pleasing perplexity, as to the meaning of her words.

They were soon explained to him, by the courtiers whom he had left, to address her.

"Did you not tell me," said he, "that Amintor was this day married?"

"Yes," they said.

"And did not his own letters," continued he, "received when I was at Patria, tell me that his hand was contracted to Aspatia?"

It *was* so, they said, but the contract had been suddenly broken off; and Amintor had this day married, under the express auspices of the King himself, the bright and high-thoughted Evadne, sister of Melantius. They added, that so far as the King had taken part in it, the marriage had been brought about as a pleasurable surprise to Melantius on his return; as the King was aware of his devoted affection for Amintor, and moreover not ignorant of a quarrel which existed between the former and old Calianax, father of the lady to whom Amintor had been first affianced.

Melantius was too well pleased (however astonished) at this new arrangement, to permit his thoughts to dwell for any length of time on the fickleness of his young friend, and its fatal consequences to Aspatia; though he was too generous not to deeply lament the hasty error which had made him seem to cast words of scorn upon the sorrows of the forsaken lady. And just as some of the courtiers were beginning to

relate to him the effects which those sorrows had produced upon her conduct and character, Amintor himself entered, to greet his friend on his so happy return.

Chapter II.

We will suppose the mutual explanations between Amintor and Melantius made and received; and the masque performed to which they were presently summoned, and which had been prepared in honour of this great marriage; and the banquet which followed it concluded; and the guests retired to their respective homes—all except those ladies of the court who were to be attendant on the bride, in her bridal chamber.

Among these was Aspatia herself,—who moved there, sad and pale, as the moon when she dares to walk the heavens in the presence of her bright rival the sun.

That Aspatia did not refuse to be present on

this (to her) trying occasion, was of a piece with the rest of her conduct since the transfer of Amintor's affections from herself to Evadne. Immediately on recovering from the first momentary pang caused by the knowledge of her loss, she seemed to put on, as a garment, a kind of fantastical sorrow;—to hug her new grief to her heart, as a young mother does the child of her shame,—loving it the more for the misery it must cost her;—to doat over and dally with the various thoughts and images that the recollection of her perished hopes was perpetually calling up, till she seemed to change the aspect of them all, by looking on them through her voluntary tears, and could half-fancy herself surrounded by a pomp of sadly sweet promises, more welcome than those which she had just seen burst into nothing before her eyes.

Above all, she was fond of brooding over the feeling of her own constancy: for Amintor had been able to take from her *his* love alone, not *hers* from *him*. And she would sit for hours

together, among her maidens, singing aloud to them snatches of old ditties, and telling them fragments of antique tales, the burthens of which were, the imperishable love of forsaken lovers, and the sweet duty of dying for those who have ceased to live for us.

Such is the gentle creature who is now to assist in ushering into the arms of Amintor—of *her* Amintor (for she has felt him to be more than ever hers, since *she* has ceased to be *his*),—a lady who is above her in wealth and station, and brighter at least, if not lovelier, in beauty; but, oh! how poor (she thinks) compared with her, in that all-sufficing love for her Lord, without which beauty is a bauble, wealth a weight, and state and station stumbling-blocks in the path of wedded happiness! Behold her, where she moves to and fro meekly, in the bridal chamber of the proud Evadne; uttering no word of sorrow or complaint, until the empty jests of her light companions call upon her to speak; and then, discoursing as openly of her love as if she were

alone in her closet, communing with her own full heart:—for those who love as this lady did, care not if all the world know it,—especially when it is not returned: for when it *is* returned, a full-thoughted ease of heart possesses them, and they are content to brood silently over their great bliss. It were a strange contradiction indeed to the sweet instincts of its nature (the very essence of which is its utter want of all selfishness) if a virgin heart were to glory only in bartering itself away at the price of another heart, and be ashamed of giving itself freely, "without money and without price!"

Such a heart was not Aspatia's. She felt the sorrow of her loss more deeply than anything but silence could tell. But she was even garrulous in her grief, whenever it gave her occasion for speaking of her own great love. And when the cold and careless Evadne taxed her with looking sad in the midst of smiles, her reply was,—

"It were a timeless smile should prove *my* cheek :
It were a fitter hour for me to laugh
When at the altar the religious priest
Were pacifying the offended Powers
With sacrifice, than now. This should have been
My night, and all your hands have been employed
In giving me, a spotless offering,
To young Amintor's bed,—as we are now
For you. Pardon, Evadne—'would my worth
Were great as yours, or that the King, or he,
Or both, thought so ! Perhaps he found me worthless.
But, 'till he did so, in these ears of mine,
These credulous ears, he pour'd the sweetest words
That art or love could frame."

Having duly prepared all things in the bridal chamber, for the reception of Amintor, the bride-maidens at length left it, each with a smiling "good night!" to the bride; and Aspatia, in addition, pronounced a solemn blessing upon her—bidding her love her lord no worse than *she* did, and begging of the gods that no discontent might ever grow between them.

She then left the chamber, with a kind of

triumphant sadness upon her brow, and an earnest gravity in her mien,—as if she felt that she was stepping out of life into death, a willing sacrifice at the altar of imperishable love. But there was still an unsettled something about her air, which seemed to indicate that she had not yet completed the task she had set herself to perform.

This was explained when she met the bridegroom in the antechamber, as her companions (who had quitted the bride before her) were leading him in.

"Go," said she to him, (taking his hand within both of hers,)—

> "Go, and be happy in your lady's love!
> May all the wrongs that you have done to me
> Be utterly forgotten in my death!
> I'll trouble you no more. Yet I will take
> A parting kiss, and will not be deny'd."

Here she raised her lips towards his, and he bent down his face towards her—seemingly shaken with a new and strange emotion—and

received her proffered kiss. She then continued, after a moment's pause, during which she looked steadfastly in his face,—

"You'll come, my Lord, and see the virgins weep,
When I am laid in earth, though you yourself
Can know no pity.—Thus I wind myself
Into this willow garland, and am prouder
That I was once your love, though now refused,
Than to have had another true to me.
So with my prayers I leave you."

So saying, and not waiting for a word in reply, she at once departed.

Chapter III.

Amintor passed into the chamber of Evadne with wet eyes, and a soul labouring with the sudden weight of thoughts that would not be controuled, even by those which beckoned him forward. The grief of Aspatia seemed to pierce into him, deeper and deeper, at every step he took towards what had till this moment seemed the haven of his hopes; and he stood still for an instant, and trembled like a self-convicted culprit.

Ill betides the bridal couch that is so approached!

Evadne met him in the midst of her chamber, and her bright presence at once put to flight all

his momentary fears and misgivings. He advanced towards her with an air of triumphant joy, and was about to lead her away into the dim recesses of the stately apartment,—when, gazing into her proud eyes, to seek for a fitting answer to his own tumultuous thoughts, he beheld them fixed as the stars above, and as cold; while round her mouth, and in her whole demeanour, there was a look of settled scorn, that seemed as if it could not pass away.

"What is this?" said he, after a moment's pause—"what looks are these, for such a time and such a place? Or does my beautiful Evadne clothe the sun of her beauty in these momentary clouds, only that it may seem the brighter when she casts them off? It needs not. My poor vision could scarce bear its beams, when they were chastened by all maidenish thoughts. But *now*—when Love and Hymen join to bid them burn!—Come!—Come!"

And he was again about to lead her away; but she stepped back from his approaching touch,

and looking at him still more scornfully than before, motioned him from her silently, and then pointed to a seat that was near them.

"What is this, Evadne?" said he once more, with an air of half-playful, half-alarmed perplexity. "Is not this our bridal night? Or have I but dreamt my joys? Or do I dream them now—and shall I wake to find them shadows?"

She heard him silently, but with a bitter smile upon her lips; and as he once more approached her, she drew back, and for the first time spoke;—

"The lord Amintor has yet to learn whom he has wedded. He seems to think Evadne but another name for the humble and the wronged Aspatia. Let him know her better! True, she has stood at the altar with him, and the world has heard her proclaimed his bride. That she should be so was the will of one who may command the wills of all. She *is* the Lord Amintor's bride. Let him call and think her such, and be content. But let him keep his love

for those who seek it, and have love to give him back in barter. Evadne is not one of those."

Utterly confounded as Amintor was by this speech, and the manner in which it was pronounced, he could not help feeling that there must be some concealed jest lurking beneath it; for Evadne had received his vows with as much gentleness as her haughty nature seemed capable of; and her dazzling beauties, added to the earnest interest which the King himself had seemed to take in the union, had prevented him from seeking to look very narrowly into the secret feelings of this proud lady, whom none but princes had hitherto dared to ask in marriage, and had asked in vain.

Still he had wooed her at the express instance of the King himself, and won her (seeming) free consent to his wishes. What could he think then of such words as these, uttered in a tone and with a look that froze the very blood in his veins? Wonder-stricken and perplexed as he was, he

still tried to rally his spirit for a reply, that should in some sort be answerable to the tone and tenor of her strange words.

"The lady Evadne's tongue, I find, can pierce as deeply as her eyes. Her love-jests, if they were heard by other ears than mine, would sound like scornings. What! would she first give wings to my love, and then stop it midway in its mounting flight, and bid it fall headlong, ere it feels the full heat of those beams which called it into life? Would she——"

Here he paused for a moment; and then, breaking involuntarily into a frank and good-humoured smile, continued in an altered tone,—

"Come, come, my beautiful Evadne! no more of this! It is our bridal night. No more words but one—and let not *that* be heard, even by ourselves. Let it be thought and felt alone. 'Love!' is the only sound should pass the lips of lovers, on the night that makes them one. We but affront the Power that spreads and sanctifies our bridal couch, if we delay to press

it when *he* gives us warrant. Come! why what a form is here! Kings might grow prouder on their painted thrones, by gazing on it merely;—but to clasp it thus, and call it mine!——"

Amintor scarcely perceived the triumphant smile that passed over the features of Evadne, as he pronounced the last portion of this passionate rhapsody; though he did observe the contemptuous frown into which that smile faded away, as he finished it, and was about to accompany it by the corresponding action in which his thoughts and words were losing themselves;—when Evadne, instead of receding from him as before, advanced a step or two to meet him, and with her stately head thrown back loftily, and her extended hand placed upon his breast, bade him "Forbear!"

"Forbear, and listen," said she; "but hear patiently, or not at all. If you stay or interrupt me by useless words, I am dumb; and you may learn your fate as best you can,—but not

from me. I am thine, Amintor, and *not* thine—for I am not my own."

"What mean these idle riddles?" exclaimed he, impatiently: but she continued without seeming to hear him.

"Your King (and mine!) commanded me to wed you, and I have obeyed. Think yourself, then, Evadne's lord, and be content;—and in all outward seeming *be* her lord. The rites that gave her to you, gave you this—but they could not give her love, and shall not give that which (love away) were nameless infamy. I am your wife, Amintor, as far as laws and rites can make me such. But yonder couch, (call it not your bridal one—for it is not Aspatia's!)—yonder couch (I have sworn it—sworn it more deeply than your light thoughts can compass)—now that it is yours, cannot again be mine. I leave it to you, and depart. If you are wise, press it in silence, and be patient; and to-morrow, when you leave it, think yourself blest that you have pressed it alone."

Saying this, she was about to quit the cham-

ber by a side entrance, which led to another apartment; and had almost passed the door, before Amintor recovered from the stupor of amazement into which her speech—at once clear and mysterious—had thrown him. The sight of her stately form, as it was half disappearing from his view, roused him in a moment, and made him forget the strange import of her words, and remember only that he was about to lose her; and he rushed to her, and seizing her arm, drew her back into the chamber.

"Amintor," said she, "beware! The words that you have heard are final, and pronounced in mercy *to you*, not to her who uttered them. If these have wounded your peace, seek not to hear others that might—that must—destroy it for ever—but that must and shall be uttered, if you stay or trouble me further with your importunate love. Let me depart."

"Evadne," said he, as he continued unconsciously to grasp her wrist, and gaze upon her proud eyes—the fire of which seemed to glow

more and more fiercely every moment that he held her — "Evadne — do you rave, or jest? What mockery is this?"

Again his wondering fears forsook him, and his fierce love returned; and he once more addressed her in tones of eager endearment:—

"Come, sweetest—enough of this coyish jesting. It cannot, and it need not, add to the flames that consume me. I burn—I die to clasp thee to my longing heart. The King, who gave thee to me, little thinks that I so ill deserve the proud gift, as to be dallying and delaying with it, in idle *words*. Come—let us to bed——"

At the name of the King she flung her arm from him, with a look of added disdain; and then, resuming a more dignified serenity of mien, exclaimed,—

"Presumptuous fool! the King!"——

She paused a moment; and then proceeded in a more subdued strain,—

"Amintor—you know not either the King,

or me, or yourself; and I would willingly have left you in your ignorance of each,—and left you blest in being so. You will not have it thus. Take, then, your choice, and know, that which, being known, must make you such as even I can pity, in the midst of my disdain."

He stood listening in silent wonder; and she continued:—

"I told you that I do not love you. Think you it is because I do not love? I do, and am beloved, and glory in my love—ay—even now, that I am wedded to the man whom most I hate *because* I am wedded to him. You ask me why I wedded him? Because I love my fame only less than my love; and would give, and *have given*, all but *that* to diet it. Nay—be patient, and hear me! When I name the being who controuls my fate (and yours) you will perforce be so."

"Name him,"—exclaimed Amintor, fiercely, —"Name him at once, and torture me no more with thy strange, fatal words: Name him—that

I may shed his blood upon my shame, and hide it from my sight. Methinks, even if he were a god, I could assail him on his seat of light, and pluck him to the ground beneath my feet."

"He *is* a god,"—exclaimed Evadne, triumphantly, and no whit moved by the vehement raving of Amintor;—"He *is* a god, to *thee!* You would not dare to touch him, though he were here before you—even *here.* Amintor, it is THE KING!"

Amintor staggered as if struck with a sudden blow, and sank into a seat that was near—all his limbs seeming at once to be unstrung, as if their vital powers had left them.

After a few moments, he began to recover the use of his faculties; and as he gradually lifted up his prone head from off his breast, on which it had sunk, he murmured to himself,—

"Aspatia!—Ah—my poor gentle, patient, wronged Aspatia! Was it for this——"

Here he opened the eyes he had for a moment closed; and as he beheld Evadne, all that he had

just heard seemed to rush back upon his senses, as if it had been reuttered.

"The King, Evadne!—Oh—it is *not* the King!—say it is not."

"Amintor"—returned she proudly, but with an air of calm self-controul, which, however, it seemed to demand all her efforts to preserve,—"Amintor, it is the King! Once more I bid you hear me, and be patient. I am the King's, and he is mine—body and soul I am his. Need I then say I cannot, will not be another's—will not stoop to less than the greatest?——"

"But what demon"—interrupted Amintor—"put it in your thoughts to marry *me?*—or in the King's to bid you?"

"The demon of my fame," replied Evadne. "I must be a wife, or be dishonoured. You sought me for one, and I am yours—sought *me*, who scorned you,—leaving one who lived but in your sight, and dies without you. Do not complain, then; since, in seeking mine own ends, I have but fulfilled those of justice. Now, once

more, let me depart. Keep your own counsel, and you are safe from that shame which cannot fall on *you* without reaching *me*."

So saying, she was about to quit him; but he exclaimed, eagerly—"Stay, Evadne!——"

He then paused, and a throng of contending thoughts and feelings seemed to pass across his brow, and agitate his whole frame. At length he said,—

"Is this true, Evadne?—And does the King know that *I* know the foul dishonour he has cast upon me?"

She replied, "All the King knows or heeds is, that I have sworn myself *his* alone, and that I shall keep my oath."

"Then," said Amintor, slowly and solemnly, "one thing I charge thee, Evadne: Let him not know that I conceive he wrongs me. His name is as a spell even upon my thoughts—much more upon my words and deeds—and binds them in subjection to his will: but only while my name and fame are clear. I can bear

to *be* the thing he has made me, but not to seem it—even to him, in whose sight I *am* that thing. But if the world should know it—oh, Evadne—for his sake, and for thine own, if not for mine, sin secretly."

He paused, and then added—"One thing, at least, I thank thee for, knowing what I know: it joys me more to have missed my bridal joys, than it could to have compassed them, even had they realized my richest hopes. If I had *not* missed them, not all the reverential awe that springs within me at the name of KING, nor all the love that I (still) bear to thee, had saved ye from my vengeance. As it is—but no more. I will stay within these chamber walls to-night, that I may seem to have rested there;—and to-morrow—to-morrow——."

His speech faltered; and as he paused she left him, saying,—

"Farewell, Amintor! if you are wise, be patient and be silent. Once more, farewell!"

Who shall describe the feelings of Amintor,

when he was thus left alone in the chamber of Evadne, on the night of the day that he had stood at the altar with her, and heard the voices of assembled crowds proclaiming them *one*, chaunting congratulatory hymns in their ears, and calling down blessings from the gods upon their lives and upon their bed—that bridal bed which the hands of beauty had decked for their delight, and which now stood before his glazed and half-senseless eyes, cold, empty, and unpressed? Who shall tell the thoughts and images that coursed each other through his burning brain, each obliterating that which preceded it—each bringing with it new pains—and each leaving behind it indelible traces of its deadly course? Who shall tell this?—None: for none—not even he himself—could remember for a moment after—much less imagine—the details of his great misery. Suffice it that *one* image—that of Aspatia—predominated over all, and preserved its place distinctly, when all the rest were blending and shifting among each

other, like motes in a sun-beam. Which way soever his mental vision turned, *there* he beheld her, moving along meekly, amid the host of adverse images that were pressing tumultuously about her—with her eyes for ever fixed upon the ground, as if in search of her grave!

For a space Amintor sat silently, in the middle of Evadne's chamber, wholly possessed by the thoughts and images that his mingled disappointment, shame, and remorse, kept momentarily conjuring up;—possessed by them, but not possessing them,—for they came and went without his being able to exercise the slightest controul over them, or even to distinguish them one from another: till at length his faculties, wearied and exhausted by their perpetual yet unsuccessful efforts to reduce to something like order this chaos of contending powers, sank into a scarcely less wearying slumber; from which he was only awakened by the light of the morning sun, that seemed to shine in upon him in mockery and scorn.

Chapter IV.

Let us leave Amintor to his woes for a while, and turn to the gentle Aspatia. She little thought of the deep and deadly vengeance that awaited her wrongs, as she quitted the chamber of the proud Evadne,—her lips quivering with a bitter joy, at the first and last kiss that they had impressed on the lips of her heart's lord.

It is well she did not; for it would have troubled the serenity of her sweet sorrow, and made the sacrifice she contemplated less pure.

On quitting the chamber of Evadne, and reaching her own, there was no tumultuous confusion in *her* thoughts—no impatient recalling of past feelings and images—no idle conjuring

up of the ghosts of buried hopes—nothing to disturb that almost death-like tranquillity which seemed to tell beforehand of the grave to which it tended. And when her maidens came about her, to utter their vain condolencies on her cause of grief, or their still vainer attempts to turn aside or stay the course of it, she did but dwell upon it the more deeply and intently.

Instead of permitting them (as they would fain have done) to assume, in order to dispel her sadness, an air of gaiety which they felt not, she made them put on a mimic grief, that they might thus more aptly shadow forth the desolation in which she seemed to luxuriate. And when she felt that they could not look sorrowful enough to satisfy her doating fancy, she chid them, in words the very music of which might have steeped in melancholy the spirit of joy itself:—

> "Away—you are not sad—force it no further.
> Alas, poor wenches!
> Go, learn to love first; learn to lose yourselves;

Learn to be flatter'd, and believe, and bless
The double tongue that did it. Make a faith
Out of the miracles of ancient lovers,
Such as spake truth, and died in it; and like me,
Believe all faithful, and be miserable."

One of her maidens she set to personify the sad traditions of her country—calling up in her the semblance, first of one, and then of another, as her changing fancies served:—

"That downcast of thine eye, Olimpias,
Shows a fine sorrow. Mark Antiphila;
Just such another was the nymph Ænone,
When Paris brought home Helen.—Now, a tear;
And then thou art a piece fully expressing
The Carthage queen, when, from a cold sea-rock,
Full with her sorrow, she tied fast her eyes
To the fair Trojan's ships; and, having lost them,
Just as thine eyes do now, down stole a tear.
What would this wench do, if she were Aspatia?
Here she would stand, 'till some more pitying god
Turned her to marble."

Then she would make another of her maidens sketch forth a picture of the trusting and for-

saken Ariadne; and not finding it, when done, answerable to her own passionate conception of the scene, would have it drawn over again from herself:—

"Fie! you have miss'd it here, Antiphila.
You are much mistaken, wench:
These colours are not dull and pale enough
To show a soul so full of misery
As this sad lady's was. Do it by me—
Do it again, by me, the lost Aspatia;
And you shall find all true but the wild island.
Suppose I stand upon the sea-beach now,
Mine arms thus, and mine hair blown by the wind;
Wild as that desert; and let all about me
Tell that I am forsaken. Do my face
(If thou hadst ever feeling of a sorrow)
Thus, thus, Antiphila: strive to make me look
Like Sorrow's monument; and the trees about me,
Let them be dry and leafless; let the rocks
Groan with continual surges; and behind me,
Make all a desolation."

Thus did Aspatia doat over her sad fate, and take a wayward delight in clustering about it

all the pomp and pageantry of grief which the poets of her land had connected with their stories of false men and forsaken ladies. Thus did she as it were prepare the way beforehand—strewing it all over with funereal flowers—which was to lead to her low grave—that grave which she was already tenanting in fancy, and which she now coveted, with something of that tender and mysterious yearning, with which she had lately looked forward to what should have been her bridal bed.

Yet she would not approach the one precipitately or irreverently, any more than she would have done the other, nor without that calm composure, and gentle sense of propriety, which formed the essence of her sweet nature. She had long since numbered her hours, and allotted to each its task of preparation; and now that she saw the end of them at hand, her heart felt lighter and lighter by every one that passed away; and she dismissed her maidens, and laid down to sleep for the last time, as if her deadly

sorrow was but a thing of fancy, and the detail of her wrongs a story that she had listened to with tears of sympathy, and then wiped her eyes, and dismissed it from her thoughts for ever.

Aspatia slept that night a dreamless sleep, and woke (not as heretofore) without wishing that the day were done.

Chapter V.

Meanwhile Amintor left the chamber of Evadne, laden, even to sinking, with sick thoughts, which the buoyant air into which he stepped forth seemed but to press the more closely about his heart, and make it labour and struggle beneath them the more tempestuously.

He was alone and unobserved; and he issued from the palace at once, and, without knowing whither his steps were leading him, wandered instinctively towards a beautiful grove near the sea-shore, where he had of late been used to indulge in his day-dreams of that coming delight which yesterday was to have consummated. The early sun shone upon him as he

walked, and the tender blue of the sky smiled serenely down upon him, and the sea breeze blew softly and wooingly upon his bent brow and burning eyelids, and the branches of the trees sighed and whispered to each other like lovers, and the birds flitted about among them like the spirits of the place.

At first Amintor neither knew nor felt anything of all this,—self-absorbed as he was in the fatal change which one hour had produced within him. But the sights and sounds that come to us from the external world, and the corresponding emotions which they naturally and therefore necessarily excite within us, will not long be overlooked or disregarded. Within the gloomy walls of a prison, or the glittering ones of a palace, we may dwell interminably on one set of emotions, and ponder for ever on one source of joy or of woe. But in the presence of Nature this cannot be. We may absent ourselves from her: but if once we come fairly face to face with her, she will not long be denied *her*

share in our thoughts and feelings. And though it depends not either upon her or ourselves, of *what* that share shall consist, or whether it shall be for good or for evil, yet *be* it must.

And thus it was with Amintor. For a few moments after sallying forth from the chamber of Evadne, he was as utterly self-absorbed and unconscious of all external things, as if he had still been standing there, listening to the words that told his strange fate. But when he felt the breath of heaven about him, and saw the sunshine glittering in a gorgeous line of light upon the ocean that lay before him, and heard the eternal sound of the waters breaking upon the strand, and mingling their now gentle whispers with those of the leaves above his head, he felt his grief changed in character at least, if not relieved. It had till now lain concentrated within his own breast, and burned there like a slow-consuming fire. But now, it seemed in an instant to start into active life, like the same fire when blown upon by a sharp wind, and

to spread itself out over all nature, and through all his faculties and powers, and make them all agents and aliments to its newly-awakened wants and capacities. With the change that had taken place within him, all external things were changed; and as he had yesterday seen reflections and repetitions of his own bliss in the blissful beauty which Nature had everywhere spread about in that delicious land, so to-day the deep shadows of his own grief and shame and disappointment—each rendered deeper by the stain of remorse that blended with it—not merely blinded his sight to all beauty, but transformed it to the likeness and endued it with the qualities of its most baneful opposite.

Amintor wandered on wildly, quickening his pace, as if he fancied that he could leave his thoughts behind him, and take refuge from them in the beautiful sights and sounds that he looked for at a distance, only because he missed them here, where he had hitherto been accustomed to seek and to find them; and where assuredly he

would have found them, whatever had been his grief, if *remorse* had not mingled with it. But now, the shadow of Aspatia seemed to float before his eyes every time he lifted them from the earth, to look around him; and the solemn kiss that her cold lips had yesternight impressed upon *his*, seemed to return upon them, with a chill that pierced downward to his very heart; and echoes and images of the wrongs he had done to her, and was suffering under himself, seemed to come crowding about him, till he felt impeded by them in his progress onward, as if each had a bodily presence.

At length he stopped; he paused for a few moments, as if considering the course he should take; and then, without seeming to withdraw his attention from the imaginary objects which absorbed it, he retraced his steps towards the palace.

In returning thither, Amintor's thoughts re-assumed for a while a more healthful course, in considering what it became him to do, under the

extraordinary circumstances in which he found himself. But the result of that consideration cast him into a still more appalling perplexity than before. Was he to become the pandar to his own shame and grief, by bearing them silently? Or was he to proclaim them to the world, and so become the open mockery of his enemies, and the pretended pity of his friends? As for revenging them, his superstitious reverence for the name and person of his King was such, that the mere sight of the one, or sound of the other, was sufficient to banish all tendency towards *that* mode of assuaging his sorrows, and restoring his honour to that proud seat from which he felt that it had fallen for ever. He would as soon have thought of taking vengeance of the eternal gods, for doing their sacred wills upon him.

And then Aspatia:—the treasure of true faith that he once possessed in *her*, and had so madly and pitilessly cast away—was he to resign it for ever, while it was yet in sight, and at the very

moment when he had become sensible of its inestimable value? Last, but not lowest in this turmoil of contending thoughts that beset Amintor, was his friendship for Melantius: and how was he either to conceal from, or confess to *him*, the tale of shame and grief that touched them both with equal nearness—or rather that would pierce Melantius doubly—in his own person, and in his friend's?

In the midst of self-questionings like these Amintor reached the palace, and found the courtiers already assembled, in little knots, all happy in the new subject for gay trifling which the past day had furnished to them, and each ready with some significant nothing, either of word, or look, or gesture, to greet him as he passed among them. Most of them were too inobservant, or too occupied with their own light thoughts, to remark the distracted trouble that dwelt in the eyes of Amintor, and broke out every moment in his haggard face and unconscious air, as he moved among them as if spell-bound, and

answered their several greetings as if they had been addressed to him in a strange tongue. And those who did observe the fearful alteration which had taken place in his whole appearance and manner since yesterday, only made it the occasion of some silly jest, that did not pierce into his heart like a secret dagger, only because his distracted thoughts prevented him from understanding its import.

There was one, however, who looked at Amintor with a different eye, and the sight of whom recalled his wandering thoughts from the wild pilgrimage they were making into the past and the future, and fixed them in an instant to the central point of their present and immediate misery; as the spear of the hunter pins the flying deer to the ground, and brings about it in a moment its whole train of relentless pursuers.

Nothing quickens the senses like true affection; there is no deceiving the eye of one who loves us. Melantius met Amintor as he was passing hastily and suddenly out

of the palace court, and saw in an instant that something fatal had befallen his friend; while the sight of Melantius at once concentrated the (till then) scattered thoughts and emotions of Amintor, and forced him to make a desperate effort to conceal the tenor of them. He therefore put on an air of forced and unnatural gaiety, which, instead of dissipating, did but the more fully confirm the fears of Melantius.

The first suspicion that came across Melantius pointed at the wronged Aspatia,—of whose deadly grief, and her meek and gentle bearing under it, he had heard much since his return—more than enough to disturb and trouble the unmingled satisfaction he had at first felt in this new marriage. He feared—or rather his frank and good-natured pity for Aspatia made him almost hope—that Amintor's conscience had awakened him to a bitter sense of the woes he had cast upon that sweet-spirited lady; and he began to doubt the happy issue of a union which was

founded in falsehood, and the first fruits of which threatened remorse on one hand, and death on the other.

But thoughts of this kind were presently banished from the mind of Melantius, by the fearful and growing trouble which seemed to absorb that of Amintor; and which his knowledge of human nature assured him, could not proceed from any cause but some real and active one, pressing immediately and urgently upon the sufferer himself. All his almost parental affection for Amintor, therefore, came into play at once; and he determined to learn the cause of his grief, whatever it might be. He little thought what awaited himself in doing so!

"Amintor," said he,—after having drawn him apart, and made several ineffectual attempts to lead him indirectly into a confession of what troubled him,—"Amintor, this is not well; it is unworthy of yourself and of me; or rather, it is unworthy the friendship and affection that should make us one. I looked to have met you

with the spirit of love speaking and sparkling in your eyes, and with a solemn and sober, because an accomplished bliss, seated in triumph upon your brow. So should have appeared the husband of Evadne—of Melantius' sister—on the morning following the night that made him blest. Instead, I find him with a face picturing forth strange troubles—with an eye dim and sunken, as if from feverish unrest—a brow laden with heavy shadows, that seem to press into it like substances—an air by turns distracted and depressed—and a tongue mocking all these, by its vain attempt to conceal them beneath words of seeming indifference or merriment. Amintor, there is some secret grief upon you."

"None,—none,"—said Amintor, hastily and eagerly.—"None."

"There is," continued Melantius, "and I must know it—I must—for it must needs be a fatal one, to stir and change you thus, at such a time as this. What is it?"

"There is nothing," said Amintor, with a

forced composure of manner, and motioning as if to depart. "Evadne has not yet left her chamber. I go to seek, and bring her to you."

And he was about to quit Melantius without more words; but the latter held his arm, and stayed him.

"Amintor," said he, with a solemn earnestness which he had not before assumed, "what is there that I would not have told to you? I would have confessed my secret sins to you—even my sins of thought—if you had so sought to know them as I now seek to know the cause that casts this strange trouble over you."

"Melantius," exclaimed Amintor, in a voice faltering with inward passion, "Melantius——" Then, after an effort to rally his thoughts to the point of resolute secrecy, from which the words and manner of Melantius had for a moment shaken them, he added, in a tone of comparative self-possession,—"My friend, there is nothing—or if there be, nothing that should trouble or

invade *your* peace. The truth is, I hear strange stories bruited about the court, touching the sorrows (deadly, they say) of a gentle maiden, between whom and myself there existed ties—suffice it that they were broken by mutual consent; and that I am now—that I must now——"

Again he faltered, and hesitated, but in a moment after resumed, though in an eager and hurried tone,—

"In short, the idle talking of the court, and its strange tales touching the late bearing of old Calianax's daughter, have troubled me with fears and fancies, bred perchance only by my own busy vanity. This is all, believe me."

Amintor looked keenly at Melantius as he said this, and clearly perceived that he was still dissatisfied; whereupon, as if by an unconscious effort of his will, he seemed to lash and scourge his thoughts to a pitch of almost insane exultation, as he exclaimed triumphantly, but yet with

a bitter irony blending with the unnatural tone of his shrill voice,—

"Why, what should there be but this? What *can* there be? Am I not beloved through all this island? Does not the King rain favours on me? Do I not owe it to him that the noble Evadne—beautiful as noble, and virtuous as beautiful—graces my poor bed? What should there be to trouble me?—I am light as air—the blood dances through my veins like wine—I could leap and shout for joy!——"

"Amintor," interrupted Melantius, in a tone of mingled sorrow and severity, "the eye and ear of a friendship like mine cannot be deceived, even if they would. Every word you utter is belied by the look that comes with it, and the voice that gives it sound. Something there is—and something fatal—that you would hide from me,—from all—but most of all from *me*—from me, your friend and brother. Well—let it be so. I have done. More words were vain. But let

me say, that when Amintor seeks such a friend a Melantius *was*, (and he needs such an one—now, now, more than ever,) he may perchance not find him. Farewell!—I would fain tear you at once from my bosom!—but it will not be. You have grown there too long to be plucked away in a moment. But the roots are cut, and the plant must wither. Farewell—fickle, and false, and wayward!—May Evadne know better how to keep your faith, than I have done your friendship! Farewell."

As Melantius spoke, Amintor seemed gradually sinking into a paroxysm of passionate grief, which reached its utmost depth at these last words.

"Stay!" he exclaimed, as Melantius was departing,—"Stay, Melantius—you shall know all; —you ought and shall. Oh! Melantius—sorrows, strange and nameless, compass me about, and blast me where I stand. Melantius, I am lost—lost to my fame and country—lost to myself, to thee, to all.—Evadne——."

Here he paused for a few moments; and his friend's attention, which had been absorbed in a sort of vague wonder at his words, seemed to be directed at once to a specific point, and to be increased in eager intensity, as he pronounced the name of Evadne;—while Amintor, without observing him, continued,—

"Melantius, thy sister is—thy sister has—has——"

Again he paused and faltered, and his face underwent fearful changes; till, at last, his faculties seemed suddenly to give way, and fall precipitate from the artificial height to which they had been forced, and his whole frame bent and cowered beneath the throng of thoughts and feelings that all at once came pressing upon him; and he fell upon Melantius' neck, and wept aloud. Then, as suddenly recovering momentary possession of himself, he exclaimed, in a hurried tone,—

"Melantius, urge me no further. My griefs cannot be told—they scarcely can be borne—and

yet they must: but to tell them!—and to thee! Oh—leave me!—in pity leave me!"

Melantius was obeying the desire of Amintor at once, and without a word, but with a look of deep and keen reproach, that pierced into his friend's heart like a sharp instrument, and shook its purpose into air once more.

"Well, well," exclaimed he,—following and staying Melantius—"it shall be told. But when it is told, let me depart, and look on me no more."

Then, summoning a desperate resolution, he added, in a deep and solemn, but trembling and passion-stricken voice,—

"Melantius—thy sister is—Evadne is—a harlot!"

For Melantius to start from the spot where he stood, as if smitten by a sudden blow—to seize his sword, and rush upon Amintor, with eyes flashing fire—to pause on reaching and seeing him sink at his feet, like a victim willing to meet the blow of the sacrificer—and then to

step back and resume his self-possession:—all this did not occupy the time that is required to tell it.

"Amintor," said he, calmly, and with a look of deep commiseration, "my dear Amintor—something I see has befallen, to shake your very reason from its seat. Once more let me say, know me for your friend, and trust me. Whatever it be, it cannot be without a remedy. Let the madness you uttered but now be as nothing. I heard—or heeded it not. Once more, confide in your friend."

Amintor interrupted him, with a determined and desperate haste of manner, as if resolute to execute his purposes of disclosure at once, lest his present will to do so might fail him for ever.

"Melantius, in my turn let me say—hear me! What I have uttered—fearful as it is for both of us—is true. Evadne is a wanton. The King! the King! it is the King's work. He it is who has betrayed, dishonoured, destroyed us. Nay,

—hear me!—you *would* hear me, and you must—nay, you must—for it befits not that a shame like this should lie upon us unrequited. And yet for *me* to requite it!—think of *who* they are that have thus struck our honours down, and trampled and defaced them! One the King,—a name the very sound of which, uttered by my own lips, sends awe into my soul, and bids it bend and bow beneath his will. The other, my friend's sister—nay, more —queen of my thoughts, and mistress of my heart: the being on whom——"

Here he stopped suddenly, for the looks and gestures of Melantius recalled Amintor's thoughts from the course into which they were wandering; and he resumed his disclosure of what had taken place on the past night.

"Melantius, hear me and interrupt me not. Last night, when the maidens of the court—(Aspatia was among them!)—when they ushered me to Evadne's chamber, she came to me, not like a bride or mistress, but clad in a queen-

like state, that awed and chilled, while it inspired and lifted me above myself, to think that she was mine. I approached, and would have sealed my claim to her, first by a reverent kiss, but she repulsed me, coldly at first, then haughtily;—and when I——"

A sudden emotion here seemed to seize upon him; and after a moment's pause he continued, in a hurried and still more agitated manner,—

"But what needs this record and repetition of my shame!—The very words in which I would tell it seem to cleave and blast me, before I utter them. Suffice it, Melantius, that she spurned my offered homage—despised my love—contemned my claims upon her—and at last boldly avowed—nay, gloried in her guilty passion for another—for the King!—and in the means which they had taken, in our marriage, to conceal the shame that must else have fallen on her. And then, bidding me at my peril keep my own counsel, left me in proud

disdain, as if *she* were the injured one, I the guilty."

During the utterance of this disclosure, Melantius stood gazing on Amintor, silent and motionless,—a strange fire burning within his eyes, but his lips compressed, and his whole frame stiffened and rigid, as if from some internal effort to controul or direct his emotions. When Amintor ended, Melantius stood thus for a few moments, gazing as if into his very soul; and then he said,—

"Amintor, this is true which you have told me—I see it is, and do not bid you confirm it to me with an oath. Strange and impossible as it would seem to thought, I see that it is true—I see it in the wreck and ruin it has wrought upon you. Now, Amintor, hear me. Has thy friendship for Melantius survived that wreck? It has—I see it has. Then promise me one thing,—never to stir in this affair without my knowledge and counsel—never to even meditate revenge, till——"

"Oh, my friend," interrupted Amintor, feebly and mournfully, as if all his manhood had forsaken him, and with it all his late rage and indignation, and nothing was left to him but impotent sorrow;—"Oh, my friend, there is little need to bid me promise this. Revenge! If I could even meditate on vengeance, I were not the wretched thing I am. To revenge our wrongs, is in some sort to requite and cast them off. That I cannot do this—dare not, and would not if I dared—is the deepest and deadliest of all the wrongs I suffer and sink under. Talk not—nay, think not of it, Melantius! do but think *who* it is that has heaped this hill of fire upon our heads. It is THE KING!"

"Well, well," said Melantius, with a slight hurry of tone and manner, which seemed to bespeak a wish to hide the tenor of his thoughts—"Well, well, be it so! it is best. Go in, Amintor. Collect your thoughts, and school them into patience. Something may yet be done. Confide in me. For the present I leave

you. But remember, Amintor, our friendship still survives: nothing can touch that. We still live for each other. Remember, too," he added after a moment's pause, as if to consider whether he should say more or not;—"Remember, too, that Aspatia still lives, and loves you. What, man! never let your proud soul sink prone to the earth. This island is not the world. There may still be a way to fling these sorrows from us, and be ourselves again."

So saying, he left Amintor abruptly, the utter prostration of his mind and heart increased rather than lessened, by this recalling to them of a name which, in imaging forth what he might have been, did but the more darkly shadow the picture of what he was.

Chapter VI.

From the first instant that Melantius heard and believed the tale which his friend had just related to him, his course was irrevocably taken; and nothing remained but to choose the path by which he should pursue it. He clearly perceived, too, that the indecision of character which was the chief and besetting weakness of his friend, must prevent *him* from taking any part in that course. On leaving Amintor, therefore, he at once cast away from him all considerations, but those which tended immediately to the accomplishment of his purpose of revenge. His fame was forgotten; his friendship for

Amintor was as a thing that had never been; his loyalty to the King was changed into its most deadly opposite; and his brotherly pride and affection for Evadne were turned into that shame and loathing which kept perpetually goading him on, to the attainment of that end which he seemed to see before him like a bodily object.

But with all the emotions that assailed Melantius, there was mixed up no fear of failing to attain his object, and therefore no precipitation in the pursuit of it. He felt that his revenge, to *be* revenge, must be complete; that that which is purchased at the price, or even at the risk, of our own destruction, is not merely an empty image, but an insulting mockery, of the substance, and such as a fool or a woman may compass. Such a revenge did not Melantius seek, but one which should place him at least on a level with the object of it. And his character and temperament—that provident foresight and steady self-possession which, much more than his

undaunted courage, had gained him his present fame and honours—seemed to promise him all that he sought.

On quitting Amintor, Melantius retired to his own apartment; and, when there, at once re-assumed that inflexible calmness of demeanour which even the fatal disclosures of the morning had but for a moment disturbed; and he addressed his whole soul to the great end which was now to absorb it. "*The King must die.*" That was the theme which was to fill and occupy his whole thoughts, and mould and move all his actions, until it was accomplished. He must die openly, in the eye of all the world, and in express and proclaimed expiation of the crime he had committed. Moreover, he must know and feel that he was so dying, and that the doer of this great act of justice was to answer it only as such. *This* would indeed be revenge; but nothing less than this.

But how was this just revenge to be attained? The King was absolute in his power; and the

guards and retainers of the court were devoted to him.

Melantius, as he walked to and fro in his apartment, thought steadily on these things for a while, and as calmly as if he had merely been taking counsel of himself, on some point of his public duty. He then seated himself for a brief space;—but still no expression, but one of deep thought, moved or marked his marble features.

At length, he lifted himself up proudly from his posture of reflection; a half smile, as if of internal triumph, passed over his countenance, and then it seemed at once to settle into that look of deep and severe repose which indicated that his purposes were finally taken; and he issued from the palace, and directed his steps towards the Citadel of which Calianax was governor.

Since the late fantasy (to him so strange and mad in its results) which had taken possession of his daughter, Calianax had grown ten times more wayward and tetchy than he had always

been; and in particular, the dislike arising out of his old quarrel with Melantius had assumed more asperity than ever, since the fatal union of Amintor with Evadne; a union which he could not but attribute to the influence of her brother, both with the King and with Amintor. So that even the devoted attachment and reverence of Calianax for the King himself, could scarcely restrain him from flinging words of insult at Melantius, in the very presence of the former,—where alone they ever met. Yet it was Calianax whom Melantius now went to seek; for through his means alone could his projects of revenge terminate successfully.

"Well," exclaimed Melantius, in a tone of good-humoured raillery, on meeting Calianax, who was descending the steps towards the outer gate of the Fortress, just as Melantius was entering it to seek him—"Well, Calianax, is our old feud forgotten? Has not the poor service I have done the state wiped away the remembrance of it? It had need; for I come

to beg a boon of you—and a great one too—no less than that you give up your office to me." He paused a moment; and then added, without any marked emphasis on the words,—"I would kill the King; and I cannot do it safely without having possession of this Fortress. What says Calianax?—Will he yield it to me quietly?—or must I lay siege to it—(the first it has ever suffered in his hands)—a siege of wit—and wile it from him whether he will or no?"

"He is mad"—thought Calianax to himself—eyeing him from head to foot. "His successes have turned his brain. Let's hear if he'll repeat this. Fewer words than these have stopped the breath of greater men than he. This were indeed a dainty way to acquit myself of all the injuries he has done to me, and of this last, and greatest of them all, to my poor weeping girl.

"What says the Lord Melantius?" asked he aloud; "I did not hear him; or at least I did not hear aright."

"I said," replied Melantius, in the same calm tone, after glancing around to see that they were alone,—"I said that I must kill the King; and that I cannot do it safely, unless my friend Calianax will give me up the keys of this Citadel: which he will do, I know, if it be only for the love he bears to me and mine!"

Calianax was no less perplexed by these extraordinary words, (which seemed to him simple madness,) than by the calm and perfectly unembarrassed tone and manner in which they were uttered; and he saw no way of replying to them, but by silently passing on towards the outer gate of the Fort; which he was preparing to do, when Melantius stepped before him, and said, in a totally altered manner, but still with the same firmness and self-possession,—

"Nay, Calianax, do not think to leave me thus. I must and will have what I seek of you; by fair means, if it may be so; if not——"

"Why this is madness—or worse"—inter

rupted Calianax, whose slender portion of courage entirely forsook him, on perceiving that Melantius had at any rate *some* determined purpose in view; though of what nature he was still unable even to guess. And as he well knew that the purposes of Melantius, whatever they were, seldom went unperformed, all he now desired was, to escape from him for the moment, that he might take immediate advantage, with the King, of the words which had been, as he thought, so madly or foolishly uttered. Accordingly, he addressed all his little cunning and dexterity to the sole end, of getting himself and his most unwelcome companion fairly out of the Fort.

"Would Melantius make a traitor of me?" he continued.—"If he would, he must at least give me a little time to consider of it."

"I take you at your word," said Melantius, stopping him short; "an hour hence I'll seek you in the hall of the palace, and I look to find you friendly to my purpose. Farewell."

And he instantly left Calianax, utterly bewildered by the unaccountable words he had heard, but even more pleased than bewildered, at having so unexpectedly got rid of the utterer of them, and at the certainty which they seemed to promise him, of a speedy requital of the fancied injuries he had suffered.

"This fighting fool," said he to himself, "dares talk even more than he dares act; which is what I did not look for from him. But if I do not make his words (jests though they were) as fatal to him as if he had put them into deeds, may the pale cheek of my poor patient girl never know red again!"

And he hastened on towards the palace, as fast as his old limbs would carry him.

As for Melantius, so sure was he of succeeding in that part of his enterprise which depended upon Calianax, that on leaving him he proceeded to arrange with two or three of his most trusty followers, as to the occupation of the fort on the following morning; and then he at once

addressed himself to the more important and difficult task, of preparing Evadne for the part which he intended *her* to act, in his proposed Tragedy.

Chapter VII.

There was to be a second great banquet at the palace that night, in honour of the late marriage; and there it was that Melantius proposed to put in practice the stratagem that was to gain him possession of the Fort,—and the first step of which stratagem consisted in the seemingly mad avowal which he had just made to Calianax.

The halls of the palace were splendidly adorned and lighted; the tables were set out with all dainty fare; the ordinary guests were arrived; and nothing was wanting to complete the gorgeous scene, but the presence of the King himself, and those nobles of the land who formed his immediate train.

The course of our Tale forbids us to concern ourselves much with this gay multitude; but it does not permit us to pass it by without relating, that Aspatia was there,—her pale face and beautiful form moving meekly among the glittering throng, garlanded fantastically, as if with sacrificial flowers,—like a spotless heifer pacing the floor of some gorgeous temple, surrounded by the proud priests and senseless votarists in whose sight, and for whose pleasure, it is presently to die.

The King at length arrived,—seemingly in earnest conversation with old Calianax, and preceding his train by a short space. Among the latter were Amintor, Evadne, and Melantius.

As the King entered the hall, those who looked at him with observant eyes might perceive a slight shade of trouble spread over his face, which the incredulous and half contemptuous smile that curled his lip as he spoke to Calianax, seemed to endeavour in vain to chase away.

"Nay, nay," said the King in a low voice, as they passed up the hall, amid the crash of music, to the platform on which the royal table was elevated—"it is your old enmity to him that conjures up this fancy in your brain: for I will not think that you could dare deceive me by inventing it."

"My liege, I pledge my life that it is true," said Calianax.

"What," continued the King—"that he plainly told you—told *you*, his ancient enemy—that he would kill me, and must have the Citadel to aid in his escape?"

"I will accuse him of it now, Sire, in the open hall, and before all this great assembly, if you so will it, and will protect me from his mad vengeance."

"No,"—said the King. Then, after considering a moment, he added—"I know not, Calianax, how to either believe or disbelieve you, in this matter. But we may find a way to reach the truth, if you dare stand the trial of it. He

has served me nobly, and must not be accused wrongfully, and his accuser escape free, as if his words were jests. If you persist in this strange tale, I have thought a way to prove either his guilt or innocence; but if the latter, not all your loyalty, Calianax, nor all your load of years spent in my service, shall weigh against my anger at this jest, or whatever else it be. I will not give you to his vengeance; for that were fatal. This dream of your dotage (I will not call it an invention of your hate) shall lie buried in my breast. But you must give up your office—(nay, you shall give it up to *him* —for who so fit, if honest, to hold it, or at least to name a successor?) — and quit the court for ever. Do you still persist, at this peril, in accusing Melantius of views against my life?"

"I do, Sire," replied Calianax, with all the firmness he could muster—which, however, was not enough to conceal that he was somewhat perplexed with misgivings, as to what might be

the end of this adventure,—which he had at first looked upon as so secure a means of vengeance upon his old enemy, and at the same time so just a one: for there was something in the manner of Melantius when they last met, which fully persuaded him that his views really were such as he had avowed them.

By this time the King was seated; and the banquet commenced. After a while, as Melantius and Calianax were both standing near him, the King called for a cup of wine; and when he had received it, he paused for a moment, looking thoughtfully as he lifted it to his lips; and then, without tasting it, he turned to Melantius, and casting a penetrating look at his countenance, said,—

"I am thinking, Melantius, how easy it were for any one we trust, to take our life—in such a cup of wine as this, for instance."

"It were not difficult, Sire," said Melantius, —"at least for a traitor at once bold and cunning."

"Such as you are," thought Calianax; and he almost said it.

"We who sit on thrones," continued the King, still keeping his eye fixed on Melantius, "had need have honest men about us—such as you all are here."

And he took his eyes from Melantius, and bowing around, drank the cup of wine that he held in his hand.

During the few moments which this action occupied, Melantius stepped close to Calianax, and whispered in his ear,—

"Well—have you thought of what we talked of? My purpose still holds; and as you did not keep your appointment with me, you may tell me your determination here."

Then, without waiting for a word of reply, he resumed his place beside the King,—leaving Calianax in greater astonishment and perplexity than ever, at his seemingly insane boldness.

Meanwhile the King, after exchanging a few

indifferent words with others who were about him, again addressed himself pointedly to Melantius, and again kept his eyes fixed on him while he spoke.

"And yet it would show a strange and insane desperation, to attempt such an act here. He that did it must at least have sold his life beforehand. He could not escape."

"Not if he were known," said Melantius, without seeming to perceive anything extraordinary in the words or manner of the King.

"He *would* be known, Melantius," said the King, still more pointedly than before.

"And if he were," said Melantius, "and should still escape, it must be by bearing away all our lives upon his sword. There is no other means."

"Yes," said the King, "one way there is, and one person, even here, who might do it—and safely too. Old Calianax there—the governor of the Citadel. Nay, Calianax," continued the King, "do not think I doubt your love and

loyalty—they have been tried too long. But you *might* do it, having the means of safety and escape in your own hands. He who holds the Citadel, holds the King's life at his will—does he not, Melantius?"

Then, without seeming to wait for a reply, he called Calianax close up to him, and said in a whisper,—"Well, what say you now? Do you still persist! Sure you have dreamt this foolish story. I have uttered words that must have fetched the blood into his face, and shook his limbs with fear, had he a thought of guilt within him. And yet you see he flinches not. Nay,—look at him now. How could he bear, think you, these whisperings and these looks—pointed upon him as they are,—if thoughts of treasonous murder were at work within him? Go, Calianax—let me hear no more of this doting folly—for such it is, or worse."

And he seemed at once to cast all doubts and suspicions from him, and turned to converse with some of the other courtiers who now came round him.

The King had scarcely done this, before Melantius was once more at the side of Calianax, whispering in his ear the same apparently insane proposition, which now struck upon his senses like the muttering of some strange spell, and seemed to drive him to distraction; and he immediately exclaimed aloud, without directly addressing the King, and so that the whole assembly might hear him,—

"There! there! he says it again! he urges me again!" Then turning to the King, he added,—"My liege, even now, this instant, he bad me give him up the Fort. You might have heard him."

"This is madness," said the King;—"let him be looked to." Then, turning to Melantius, he added,—"Melantius, what has befallen anew betwixt you and Calianax, that the mere sight of you seems to move him thus?"

Melantius replied calmly, that Calianax had become much changed of late, and particularly since the marriage of Amintor with Evadne

had killed his daughter's hopes; and that these strange moods of seeming madness were common with him. Then, the moment the King's attention was directed elsewhere, he turned to Calianax again, who was standing alone, utterly confounded by all that he saw and heard, and said to him, in the same fearful whisper, which seemed to pierce into his heart like a flame of fire,—

"How long must I treat you thus, Calianax, before you give me up the Fort? Come—say it is mine at once. It must be, and shall be. To-morrow it will be taken from you, whether you will or no. And it will be strange if my services cannot then command so poor a reward as the procuring it for whom I please. Besides—give it me willingly, and it shall cure our feud, and shall be yours again when I have killed the King, and made my terms of safety. What say you? Shall I have it?"

Calianax could bear no more, but burst out into a weak fury of passionate exclamation,

which the King put an end to at once, by saying,—

"Calianax, be silent, and leave the court; and remember that though I see and pity the cause of this strange folly, the price of it must be paid. All the court has heard your mad accusal of my most valued servant and friend; and they must know, from your example, that such words, wild and empty though they be, may not be uttered lightly.'

Calianax was about to say something, with a beseeching gesture, and between rage and weeping; but the King added, with an air of dignified severity,—

"No more!—Leave us!"

And he retired to a distant part of the hall, and was followed by the whole assembly; leaving Melantius and Calianax alone together.

"And *am* I mad?" said Calianax aloud, and not observing Melantius—"And *is* this folly that I have uttered? Did I not hear him speak those

words? Do they not even now ring in my ears like sounds from hell?"

At this moment Melantius said, once more—"Well Calianax, am I to have it yet—this foolish Citadel? Or must I wait till to-morrow for it?—You see it must be mine."

Calianax was again confounded into utter silence; while Melantius continued, in an altered tone, as if moved by his grievous perplexity,—

"Come, old man—I pity your great sorrows, and your daughter's, and am grieved that I must do that which adds to them. But it is my own (which are still greater) that make me do it. I must have the Citadel. Give it up to me, and I will avenge your wrongs with my own. It is not our old feud which makes me treat you thus: that is forgotten in greater things. The King has wronged me, and I must kill him."

"Again?" exclaimed Calianax. "And if the King were here, would you again deny those words, before my face?"

"Try me. Go to him now, and I will follow you, and——"

"You shall have the Citadel," said the poor perplexed old man, as he seemed to sink into a sort of despairing imbecility.—"The King believes me mad—perhaps I am so. My honours are taken from me; my services despised; my poor girl dying; and my boy—he is too young to revenge our wrongs, and is not here to hear them. To-morrow he will be home—but to-morrow will be too late——"

Just at this moment, Diphilus, the brother of Melantius, came to them, with a look of eager haste upon his face, and said,—

"It must be done to-night, Melantius. I heard him, but now, bid our sister come to him after the banquet. Have you schooled her in her task? And will she do it?"

"She will"—said Melantius. "Never was a repentance more absolute than that which now possesses her. She seemed to glory in her shame only while it was *not* shame, but guilt

—only while she thought no eye could see it. But now that she believes all eyes are ready to turn on her in scorn, her own have lost the film that lust (not love) had drawn over them; and she sees and loathes the plague-spots that are on her, and that spread from her to us—reaching the remotest memory of our house. I think that she will do it—and bravely too—for she sees that so only can *our* honour be appeased, and *hers* avenged. That she wants the courage for this deed, I fear not—for that which calls for it was bolder still, in Dion's daughter, and Melantius' sister." After a short pause he added,—"I'll see her again. It must be done to-night, whether she do it or not. Meantime our friend here, old Calianax, will give you up the Citadel. Go with him, Calianax, and fear nothing. We'll see you safely through the dangers that are abroad, and that, but for this wise compliance with our wishes, must have crushed you.—Go."

And the poor old man went as he was bid,

without another word; as if he felt himself utterly helpless, like a child before its task-master, and compelled to yield, body and soul, to the will of his persecutor.

Chapter VIII.

Pass we now to the conclusion of the banquet, when every guest and attendant had left the open apartments of the palace, and all was hushed in the stillness of seeming slumber. But of those with whom our Tale has concerned itself, not one had sought the couch of rest, or felt as if he should ever need to press it again. The King had retired to his private apartments, his soul exulting in its sense of power and pride of place, and his countenance lighted up with an impetuous joy, at the mere anticipation of the pleasures that presently awaited him, in the arms of his guilty paramour; and he no more thought of sleep, than the

hungry tiger does when his prey is approaching, and in sight.

Of the rest, Amintor, on retiring from the hall of banquet, had sought refuge from the fierce troubles that tormented him, in the soothing stillness of one of the outer courts of the palace—which occupied a sort of terrace, looking upon the sea-shore. There he paced backwards and forwards listlessly, beneath the cool moonlight; the soft air, rich even to heaviness with the breath of many flowers, bathing his brow, and steeping his senses in that dim forgetfulness of all but the present moment, which even the most wretched can sometimes find, when they least look for it. He had come there to commune with his accumulated sorrows, and as it were to project them over all the future,—by meditating on the means he should take, of either bearing them or casting them off. But the soft wind as it blew upon him, and the sweet incense that the flowers sent forth, and the still beauty of

the scene that spread itself out interminably before his eyes, sleeping in the moonlight,—all these worked together to do the gentle will of nature upon him, and lap his wearied spirit in that oblivion of the past, without which the present had been as nothing to him, and the future filled with desolation.

There let us leave the poor sufferer for a while, to taste that brief rest which sleep would not have brought to him. He has need of something to strengthen his heart for the griefs that await it.

As for Melantius and Evadne, the former took care that they should meet together as they quitted the hall; and he led her to a private apartment, and soon found that she was as bold in the new course of honour which he had taught her, as she had been in her late one, of shame and guilt. We must leave them together, and learn the nature of their conference from its results.

Calianax and Diphilus we left proceeding,

the one to give, the other to take, possession of the Citadel.

Let us turn to the sad Aspatia. She had commanded her maidens not to attend her in her apartments that night; and she retired thither from the banquet, in a spirit nearer to a happy one than she had thought that she should ever again be mistress of: for nothing so surely brings to us that perfect tranquillity of heart in which the state we call happiness chiefly consists, as the certainty that the one purpose of our souls is at its point of accomplishment. And thus it was with this gentle victim of a broken vow. She stood upon the vantage-ground of her own resolute will, and saw from it the to-morrow that was to end all her griefs; and she leaned and yearned towards it, as the weary pilgrim yearns towards the shrine that he sees before him, at which he is to lay down the burthen of his sins, and once more be free from their deadly weight.

How the two hours of darkness following

the close of the banquet were passed by the several persons towards whom we have just cast a momentary glance, must be gathered from the events which ushered in the morning.

Chapter IX.

The dawning day found Amintor gazing upon it, at first tenderly, as its tender streaks of grey light seemed to steal upon the skirts of the departing darkness; then, with feelings almost amounting to a momentary sense of triumphant joy, as the east opened before him, like the portals of some great temple, and shot forth its rich splendours, showering them upward over the whole overhanging firmament, and changing it all into one scene of gorgeous beauty, the tints and traces of which varied every moment, as they seemed at once to blend and vie with each other in bright intensity.

He was thus gazing, in momentary forget-

fulness of all but what he saw before him, when he heard himself addressed by a voice close at hand, in the words, "My Lord Amintor!";

Alas! if a vision of beauty can blind our eyes for a while to all but its own loveliness, a single sound can fetch our wandering senses home again in an instant, and fix them, like chained galley-slaves, to the theme that is their bane.

The moment Amintor heard his own name pronounced, the bright pageant on which he was gazing passed away from his senses, as if it had been dispersed by a thunder-clap, and he at once became, what he had been on leaving the banquet-room on the preceding night—a hopeless sufferer, dead to all things but the sense of his own utter wretchedness—so dead as not even to see before him that actual death which was his only refuge.

At the sound of the above words, he at first did but start, and close his eyes. He then opened them, and looked upon the ground for

a moment, and then closed them again firmly, and stood with his arms depending by his side, and his head bent in silence, as if he could thus shut out that which he too surely knew was not *without* him, but a part of himself.

The person addressing him, on perceiving that he did not notice his words, though he had evidently heard them, waited for a few moments, and then addressed him again:

"My Lord Amintor."

Amintor now turned, and found that it was one of his own servants, who explained that he had been seeking him, and that a youth, who had lately arrived from the army, was without, and earnest in his desire to see him; and before Amintor could either deny or assent to a conference with one he knew not, the youth appeared on the terrace, and approached him.

He was dressed in military attire, and of extreme beauty; but so pale as to impair the effect which his appearance might otherwise have produced. His extreme paleness, how-

ever, seemed to be in some degree accounted for, by certain marks upon his face, as if to cover wounds received at no distant period.

At sight of the youth, there came upon Amintor's heart a pang, which he could not immediately account for; and he was beginning to lose himself again in his sorrows, when the youth announced himself as the brother of Aspatia.

This seemed at once to recall Amintor to himself; and he looked at the youth earnestly, but silently, for a few moments, and then took his unresisting hand, and pressed it,—and his heart trembled within him, and his eyes filled with tears, which he did not turn away to hide.

Having requested him to dismiss his attendant, the youth continued, in a voice that shook Amintor even more than the words it uttered,—

"Perhaps it scarcely needed, Sir, to tell you who I am; for before these blemishes were on my face (got there in the late wars), people would

say it was the picture of my sister's. And, knowing me, I scarce need tell my business with you. At least I have no skill to tell it in many words. Briefly, you have wronged my sister, Sir,—and are of too proud a race either to deny those wrongs, or the justice that I am come to claim for them."

"Deny her wrongs!" said Amintor—moved to a pitch of almost child-like grief, at every word which came from the youth's lips—"Deny them! Oh, gentle youth—would it were but as easy to repair, as to confess and repent them! —Pray leave me. I know not what you would have; but I cannot bear to look upon you; and to hear you speak, seems almost to dry up the little life that is left within me. Would it could! Pray leave me. I'll speak with you hereafter."

"I do not come to talk with you, Sir," said the youth,—"and if I did, there is no time for that. Besides," continued he, with a slight falter in his voice,—"my sister, who sent me

hither, bad me not listen to your words. Come, Sir—the laws, you know, are strict against single combats; and we had best decide our difference here, and at once. We may be stayed, else. Come, Sir—draw, and defend yourself."

"Fight with you?" exclaimed Amintor. "Seek to justify the wrong that I have done your sister? Good youth, you cannot think the thing I would not do, to requite her gentle sorrows—anything but look upon her: for the sight even of you shoots pangs into me, that—— Pray, leave me," he continued, after a pause, during which his heart seemed trembling on his lips—"another time I would fain see and know you—but leave me now—I cannot bear to look upon you."

"Ah!" said the youth, mournfully,—and with a tearful tremble in his sad, gentle voice,—"Ah! —it is as she said. She told me that if I dared to listen to you, you would speak words that would fetch the tears into my eyes. And so

indeed they do.—But yet," continued he, after a suppressed effort to rally his thoughts—"But yet she bad me not leave you, till I had righted her great injuries—and I will not. Come, Sir, no more words—but draw!"

"Not upon you," said Amintor, in the same sad prostration of spirit which had come upon him from the first moment he beheld this youth—"Not on Aspatia's brother—not though I were shamed and shunned throughout the land for it. Once more leave me. I will not fight with you."

"Nay, then," exclaimed the youth, while a strange calm seemed to keep possession of him as he spake,—"Nay, then, I must find a way to make you—for fight we must, and one of us must die!"

And he stepped up to Amintor, and struck him on the breast with his glove.

"There!" said he; and as Amintor started back from his touch, and stood writhing under the insult, the youth added, in a calm though trembling voice,—

"I am loath to do this, Sir. But there is only one way to avenge my sister's wrongs—and I must take it. In her loss, and in the fatal grief that it has fixed upon her, (I may say so—for she does not seek to hide it, even from you,) we have lost all but our honour—and that must not go too."

By the time he ceased speaking, Amintor had somewhat collected his scattered thoughts; and he now said slowly, and in a solemn tone,—

"Thy sister, youth, is a thing so much above my honour—she is so sainted in my sight by her deep wrongs—that I can endure even this for her—even a blow. Now be satisfied, and leave me."

And he turned away slowly, with an air of utter dejection, and was about to depart;—but the youth again stepped up to him, saying,—

"I see then that my sister has been wronged even worse than I had thought. She has been fooled by some faint-hearted slave, who

dares not fight. At least he may be beaten, then."

And he followed Amintor, and struck him across the face with his sword. Then, seeming to sink within himself at the effort, as Amintor turned fiercely upon him, and drew his weapon, he added, in a hollow, murmuring voice, to himself,—

"Will he never give me my death?"

"Foolish boy!" exclaimed Amintor, as he pointed his sword, and waited a moment for the youth to prepare himself—"the gods forgive me if I kill thee—but flesh and blood cannot bear this."

The instant that the youth saw Amintor's sword fairly pointed at him, he rushed forward, with his own sword uplifted, and in what, at first, seemed to Amintor a desperate effort to beat down his weapon and disarm him. But he stood firm—and the youth suddenly retreated a pace or two, after having come in contact with his weapon,—though with what

effect Amintor could not perceive; for the youth again rushed towards him, with his arms all abroad, and again met the point of his sword with his breast, as before. Upon this, Amintor dropped his hand, and exclaimed, as the youth stood bending before him, and pressing his hand to his breast, as if wounded,—

"Why, what is this?—you do not fight, but rush upon my sword as if you sought your own death, not mine."

At this instant, the scene before Amintor, sad as it was, underwent a fearful change. He heard the sound of near footsteps approaching, and turning, he beheld Evadne, rushing towards him, her hands and garments steeped in blood, and holding a bloody dagger!

"Greet me, Amintor," exclaimed she, with an air of wild triumph, and spreading her blood-stained hands and arms abroad;—"Greet me; and in that greeting, pardon, and receive me! I have done a deed that cleanses both

our honours. Nay, gaze not on me so,—but speak!"

What tools and puppets are we to the bodily senses! The mere sight of Evadne drove, in an instant, from the thoughts of Amintor, all that had so fearfully filled them during the last half-hour; and he saw nothing before him but *her* form, and the fatal signs which accompanied it. As for her words, he heard them not; and when she ceased to speak, he still kept gazing on her silently, as if what he saw had changed him into stone.

"Noble Amintor," she continued, after a momentary pause,—"let loose your eyes, and speak to me! You thought Evadne lovely, and you loved her, even when you knew that she was leprous with pollution. Is she not lovelier now? Do not these bloody rites make her look still more beauteous?"

"What would you?" exclaimed Amintor at length. "What means this horrid sight? And why do you seek *me*?"

"I have killed the King!" she exclaimed, with a look of wilder exultation than before. "I had forgotten to——"

"Woman!" exclaimed Amintor,—moved at once from the half apathetic state into which the exhausting emotions of the last few minutes had thrown him,—"you have not!—you dared not do it! Even *I* dared not—dared not to think of it—*I*, whom he has so deeply wronged. But *you!*—why he loved you—trusted you—he laid his sleeping life within your arms!"

"I have slain him," exclaimed Evadne;—"slain him in his bed—that very bed which was the impious altar on which he sacrificed a Virgin's honour—and in it the honour of a house almost as high-born and as noble as his own. Oh, Amintor!" she continued,—after a pause, and in a less wild and exulting strain—as if her over-wrought feelings were beginning to regain their wonted course;—"my noble brother Melantius—Oh! how I thank you for telling him of my foul guiltiness!—he came to me,

and turned my eyes within, and showed me such a sight, that——"

"Evadne," exclaimed Amintor,—scarcely hearing what she said, or heeding what she was about to say;—"have you indeed committed this dread act? If you have, leave me at once. The very fear of it makes me loathe to look upon you. Leave me? If you stay, I know not what my hand may do—made desperate by my sorrows and my wrongs."

"It was for you I did it," exclaimed Evadne, frantically.—"And do you now loathe me for it? Had he not shamed us past all thought?"

"Was he not our KING?" exclaimed Amintor.

During the whole of what has been described since the entrance of Evadne, the youth had been standing silently on the spot where Amintor left him, when he turned away, with his hand pressed upon his bosom, his slight form bending as if it would every moment fall, and his head leaning upon his

breast like a broken flower, and waxing more deadly pale every moment that he stood: when, just as Amintor spake the above words, the youth uttered a stifled groan, his limbs gave way under him, and he fell to the ground.

"Look there!" exclaimed Amintor, in a voice in which pity and anger seemed struggling with each other—"Look at that poor youth—Aspatia's brother—dead!—dead by my hand!—and for you, whose hands are red with a King's blood! Away, foul woman! Leave me! I loathe you now, almost as much as once I loved you. Leave me, or——"

"Amintor," cried she, in a tone of wild grief, as his words seemed to pierce her like daggers, —"Amintor, do not cast me off! Beware! I am desperate."

Then, after a pause, she sank at his feet and clasped his knees, and seemed to melt away into a momentary passion of mingled tenderness and remorse, and was about to speak, when he withdrew himself from her

grasp, and she fell to the ground,—while he once more bade her leave him, and was turning to quit the place. But she suddenly started to her feet, and cried,—

"Stay!" in a voice and with an air that seemed to resume something of their old expression of pride and command.

"Stay!" she said. "At least receive me dead!"

And she instantly plunged into her breast the dagger that she had never relinquished from her grasp,—and fell dead at his feet.

Again Amintor stood transfixed, and gazed (almost unconsciously for the first few moments) on the fearful scene that was before him. At length he recovered sufficient possession of himself to feel that there was but one course left for him, and that the end of all was at hand. He summoned his heart to strengthen itself for the act that he seemed called upon to do; and then, after a calm pause of a few moments, communed with himself aloud,—

"This earth of mine doth tremble, and I feel
A stark, affrighted motion in my blood:
My soul grows weary of her house, and I
All over am a trouble to myself.
There is some hidden power in these dead things,
That calls my flesh unto them. I am cold.
Be resolute, and bear them company!——
There's something yet which I am loath to leave.
There's man enough in me to meet the fears
That death can bring: and yet, would it were done!
—Yet still, betwixt this reason and the act,
The wrong I to Aspatia did stands up:
I have not such another fault to answer.
Though she may justly arm herself with scorn
And hate of me, my soul will part less troubled,
When I have paid to her in tears my sorrow.
I will not leave this act unsatisfied,
If all that's left in me can answer it."

Saying this, he was about to depart. But his cup of misery was not yet full. He had scarcely uttered the last words, when the youth who lay at his feet gave a faint inward murmur, as if awaking from a troubled sleep;

and then, as Amintor in an instant knelt over him, and lifted his heavy head from the earth, he opened his dim eyes, and breathed forth:—

"Amintor! Was it a dream? Ah!—no—he is here still. Amintor!——"

This sudden and unexpected change dispersed from Amintor's mind, for the moment, all but thoughts of how he might help and save the poor sufferer who rested heavily in his arms; and who now, as he was about to speak, murmured forth, in a voice that seemed to assume a still more touching softness than it had hitherto possessed, and the sound of which once more penetrated his heart, and shook it with a strange and new fear,—

"Did you not name Aspatia."

"Aye," said he.

"And talk of giving tears and sorrow to her?"

"Yes," he replied; "and but for this new joy that springs within me at the sight of your recovery, I was about to seek her, and

lay my penitent heart beneath her feet, and then, asking her sweet forgiveness, die before her."

"Ah! she is here!" exclaimed the seeming youth, while a faint flush came to her cheeks and lips, and an almost superhuman beauty passed suddenly into her face, and seemed to fix and settle there—"here in thine arms Amintor—she feels them clasped about her—Ah! do not loose them!" she cried—for her first words had struck to Amintor's heart like an ice-bolt, and stopped his blood, and paralyzed all his frame—so that her form was dropping from his hold, as if he had been suddenly stricken with death.

At her last words he seemed insensibly to close his arms about her again, so as to keep her from falling to the earth; but he still remained motionless and silent: while Aspatia, when she felt his arms pressed about her again, went on:—

"Amintor—I have *your* pardon now to seek.

Forgive this trick that I have put upon you—but I could not die anywhere but here—and by your hand."

His frame shook against hers as she spoke, as if with palsy—and she continued,—

"Nay—think not of it—it is nothing—it is but my poor body—my heart died long ago, when yours forsook it—though this kindness seems almost to make it live again. It does live! I feel it beat and leap against my side—the side that touches yours!—No!" said she faintly, and as if exhausted by the inward exertion she had long been making—"No! it is dead and cold—cold—I am cold all over——"

A shuddering thrill ran throughout her—and her eyes grew dim—and she spread her arms upon the air, as if feeling for something that had gone from her—and then she murmured forth, "Take me Amintor,—hold me,—there!—" And she dropped lifeless in his arms, which were still clasped unconsciously about her; and there he knelt over her motionless, in

the open sunshine, like a monument upon a grave.

As Amintor still knelt over Aspatia's body, pale and motionless as if entranced, a great shout was heard (not by him) from without the palace gates; and presently a tumultuous clamour seemed to fill the halls, and approach towards the terrace. But Amintor still knelt motionless over the body of Aspatia, as it hung within his clasped arms.

After a while the clamour was hushed, and Melantius appeared on the terrace. He had himself conducted Evadne to the door of the King's chamber—had waited and watched while she performed the dread deed of justice which he had put upon her, and had heard it performed—his eager ears drinking in, with a bitter joy, the last convulsive sounds of the King's dying voice. He then hurried instantly to the Fort, which was left in possession of his brother, Diphilus. There, from the walls, he summoned the King's brother, and the people

of the city; and he told them of the deadly injury that the late King had put upon him through his sister, and the just vengeance with which he had answered it,—declaring himself to have been the sole instigator, and virtually the inflictor, of that vengeance. He then tendered his allegiance to the lawful successor of the dead King, on condition of receiving, in the face of the assembled people, a full indemnity against the lawful consequences of his enforced act of justice, and free leave to either quit the kingdom at once, or stay in it, as he might thereafter see fit.

The dead King's brother and successor, being a just and honourable man, and moreover not forgetting the immediate power which Melantius held in his hands, and the still more resistless influence he was able to exercise over the whole army, which was devoted to him,—freely complied with these conditions. Melantius then ordered the gates of the Fort to be opened—yielded up the keys to old Calianax—

tendered his submission to the new King—and then instantly repaired to the Palace, in search of his unhappy sister. We have seen where and how he found her.

As for Amintor,—when he was awakened from his death-like trance by the voice and hand of his friend, and once more looked upon the scene around him, he felt that there was but one thing left for him to do. But the very defect of character which had caused all the desolation that he saw about him, and felt within him, prevented him from embracing freely its only cure. He was not *afraid* to die; and he had no heart left within him, to make him wish to live. But he had not enough strength of will to cast off his burthen at once; and having borne it for an hour, he might bear it for a day —and if for a day, for a year;—and so on for a life. And so he did bear it, till it grew to be a part of himself: and though it soon bent him towards the earth with its weight, and pressed wrinkles into his smooth cheeks, and dimmed

his eyes of youth, and whitened his rich hair, and made him an aged man, in all things but that patient wisdom and perfect knowledge which make age tolerable,—yet he bore it still, and would have borne it on for ever, had not Death been kinder to him than he could be to himself, and called him early to the peace of the grave.

THE tale which occupied the Fourth of the Evenings at Chatsworth, was not preceded by any explanatory remarks on the part of its contributor, beyond a notification, that its sole claims on the favour of the company must depend on the successful development of its extremely complex and intricate *plot;* which development must itself necessarily depend, in a very great degree, on the *attention* the hearer or reader of it may be induced to bestow on the early scenes, where the different clues to the subsequent involvements and extrications are laid down, and the loss of any one of which will throw the whole narrative into confusion.

"For the plot itself," added the writer, "as the merit of its construction belongs exclusively to the old Spanish play-writer from whom I have borrowed it, I may be allowed to say, that it is perhaps the most ingeniously

intricate, yet the most perfectly complete and effective in its results, of anything of the kind that is to be met with, even in that store-house of such elaborate ingenuities, the old Spanish dramatists."

The narrative dates during the wars between Spain and the Low Countries—about 1572.

THE ROMANCE OF AN EVENING.

CHAPTER I.

"Ah!" sighed forth the young and beautiful Donna Portia de Ronda, to her no less lovely friend and kinswoman, Donna Camilla de Peñas, as they sat together at the residence of the former at Seville, towards the fall of a rich autumn evening, each nourishing in her bosom, under pretence of endeavouring to dissipate, the sweet griefs on which each unconsciously loved to dwell, and which they cherished with a fondness scarcely less fervent than the passion from which those griefs sprang—"Ah! my dear cousin, you are as yet acquainted with but half the miseries that

attend my ill-fated love for the noble Octavio. You know with what a tried faith—with what an unmatched generosity—with what a wise discreetness—he has long served me; for (thanks to your kind friendship!) that service has been chiefly paid to me under the cloak of a feigned passion for *you:* else had the violent and jealous nature of my brother Henriquez long since placed me beyond the reach of all communication with Octavio. You know, too, the events of that fatal evening, when the impetuous Henriquez, driven almost to madness by your firm rejection of his suit, was passing by your balcony, and believed that he saw Octavio addressing *you*, (for he supposed *me* to be at home,) and with an air and manner that plainly told it was a mistress he was pleading to. You know the desperate revenge my brother attempted that same evening, against the life of his supposed rival, by waylaying him as he returned home; and the escape of Octavio,

after having been forced, in his own defence, to kill Don Gaspar, my brother's sworn friend, and the abettor of his murderous design."

"And yet," continued Portia, after a momentary pause, and partly addressing Camilla, partly musing to herself,—"so unhappy has every event growing out of our passion hitherto proved, that the *failure* of my brother's base and cruel design against Octavio has scarcely been less fatal to our hopes than if its success had been complete; since the noble Octavio is forced to hide himself like a common felon, from the vengeance that my brother still unceasingly meditates, and that the law now offers to him safely, as the penalty of Don Gaspar's death. Unhappy that I am! What are *your* griefs to mine, Camilla?"

"And is *this*, then, the sum of them, my dear Portia?" said her friend.

"Alas! no"—exclaimed Portia, with a passionate accession of sorrow; "in dwelling on my past and present sufferings, I am forgetting

the worse sorrows that await me. What I am now to tell you is a new misery, that I had never even dreamt of. Left by my dead parents at the disposal of my brother's sole and absolute will, the law, you know, takes from me all power of disputing that will, even in the case of marriage itself. You have often seen how his violent and suspicious temper has treated me; more like a slave or servant than a sister. And now, to crown his cruelties and my miseries at once, it was only a few days ago that he compelled me to sign a contract, which binds me to wed a husband I have never seen, whom *he* has chosen for me, and who is this very night expected to arrive in Seville, and claim my hand."

"This is, indeed, unhappy news, my sweet cousin," said Camilla, "and calls for speedy means to meet it. But that you may not think your own griefs greater by comparison than they are, I will now tell you mine, which I have hitherto concealed, even from you: for

knowing their hopeless, helpless nature, I was fain to suffer beneath them in silence, rather than add a weight to yours, which would not have lightened my own. And if I tell them to you now, it is that you may draw some comfort from the knowledge, that a resolute patience has enabled as weak a woman as yourself to bear without repining greater griefs than yours: for greater I must call them; since you at least rejoice in the possession of his love who has yours; while I——but you shall hear.

"You know it is but lately that I visited the court of the Emperor, whither I accompanied my dear brother, Carlos. (In this, I confess, happier than yourself, Portia, for he has ever been as kind and gentle with me as yours is rough and tyrannous.) We had been absent but a short time, when urgent business called my brother back to Seville; and on our return, passing, in our haste, too near a garrison of the enemy, (but this you already know,) our

convoy was surprised by a party of horse, and we were all made prisoners.

"I was separated from my brother at the first onset; and being carried into the garrison, and seen by the governor, he the next day sent for me, to his private pavilion, and after inquiring my name and family, made me proffers of his love. At first he addressed me as a lover merely; but being stung by my resolute and indignant refusal of his odious passion, he presently changed his tone, and approached me as a master, who had acquired the rights of conquest over his prisoner.

"Think of my condition, Portia—alone, and in the absolute power of a man whose very looks, to say nothing of his threats, and the relation in which I stood to him as a prisoner, bespoke him capable of using any means to gain his desperate ends!

"For some time I spurned his hated addresses, in terms which seemed to awe him into something like a fear of using the violence

towards me which he still threatened. But at last, after gazing on me in an agitated manner for a few moments, a feeling of desperate triumph seemed to lighten up his dark eyes, and he suddenly rushed upon me, and clasping his powerful arms around me, was dragging me towards the door of an inner apartment, when I perceived the hilt of a dagger projecting from a part of his dress. I instantly seized it, and contriving, by a sudden and desperate effort, to disengage my right arm from his grasp, I raised it in the air, and should the next moment have plunged it into his breast, if he had not released his hold of me, and stepped back a few paces. He no sooner did so, and I felt myself free from his touch, than I turned the direction of the dagger, and pointing it to my own bosom, vowed solemnly that if he advanced another step towards me, I would lay myself dead at his feet.

"His looks seemed to indicate that he regarded this as an empty threat, which I

should not dare to perform; and as I held the uplifted dagger in my outstretched hand, ready to execute my purpose if he again approached me, he seemed meditating for a moment how he should frustrate my purpose without danger to himself, when suddenly a great shout was heard without, and a confused din of warlike sounds, at which my persecutor at first started wildly, then listened for a moment with eager and anxious looks, and then rushed away, leaving me alone in the apartment.

"The wild joy that seized on me at his disappearance was too sudden and overpowering to be endured; and I almost instantly swooned. What took place during the interval of my insensibility, I know not; but on recovering my senses, I found myself lying on a couch, beside which was kneeling a stranger, of a noble mien and person, and in military attire, who, on his addressing me, I found to be a fellow-countrymen and a soldier.

"In reply to my inquiries, the stranger

briefly stated to me, that the garrison in which I had lately been a prisoner had been surprised by a troop under his orders, and that he was now ready to obey any commands that I might be pleased to lay upon him, as to my safe conveyance from the fortress, as soon as the condition of health in which he had found me would permit my removal. But as he said this, and still kept kneeling by my side, and gazing in my face, there was a look of deep and intense interest in my fate, seeming to arise out of the circumstances under which he had found me in the apartments of the governor, that at once pierced to my inmost heart, and lighted up feelings there——"

Here Camilla interrupted herself abruptly, and after a moment's pause, resumed.

"Do not, my dearest Portia, permit your feminine delicacy to upbraid the sudden birth of those feelings; but remember the peril (a thousand times worse than death) from which

it was evident he had rescued me; the dangers that still seemed to surround me in the absence of my dear brother; the ardent, yet tender respectfulness of his manner towards me; his noble person; his gallant bearing:—in short, believe that a pure, deep, and inextinguishable love, *may* be born, and reach to its maturity, in a single instant.

"But I am wandering from the course of my narrative. I have told you that this gallant soldier (still kneeling beside the couch on which I lay) tendered me, in the most respectful terms, his protection in the perils that environed me. I had scarcely time to accept (which I did with the frankness that became my situation) his offered services, and to observe the eager joy which rushed into his deep eyes and flushed his beautiful countenance as I yielded myself to his sole care and direction,—when suddenly, new alarms arose in the garrison; shouts and war-cries

were again heard; and the name of 'Antonio' was loudly and eagerly repeated, by numerous voices that seemed moving in all directions.

"My new protector started to his feet at these sounds, and with an air and mien that I could almost have fancied to bespeak a desperate conflict between love and honour, he exclaimed—

"'Pardon, lady, that I am compelled for a moment to abandon the dear charge you have been pleased to place in my hands. I know not what these new alarms portend; but I am leader here, and will not affront the noble nature that looks out from that face, by supposing you would think me worthy of the high task of protecting *your* honour, if I could forget *my own*. Those cries are from my troops, who seek their leader in some present peril; and I must fly to them. The danger, whatever it may be, cannot be great or lasting. When it is over I will instantly return to you. In the mean time, feel yourself safe here; for

I will place such guards about your chamber as shall defy all present peril. In truth, lady, if I were not sure of this,' said he, on perceiving that my fears were returning, 'I doubt if Antonio de Mendoza would not abandon even his honour itself, rather than for a moment endanger that matchless beauty and virtue (so he said) which has placed itself under his care.'

"At this moment, the shouts of the soldiery were redoubled; my gallant protector rushed from the chamber; and I have never beheld him since!

"How my dear brother was enabled to extricate me from my desolate situation, you already know."

"But what," exclaimed Portia eagerly, "what did you say was the name of your protector?"

"Antonio de Mendoza," replied Camilla.

"Antonio de Mendoza?" reiterated Portia, with increased marks of surprise.

At this point of the conference between our

heroines, the haughty, jealous, and vindictive Henriquez, brother to Portia, entered the apartment.

"I am glad to find," said he, "that though you do not entertain his suit as I could wish, you can at least think and speak of your affianced husband in his absence."

"Her husband!" exclaimed Camilla, in a quick whisper to herself, which almost reached the jealous ears of Henriquez.

"Have you," continued he, "prepared the letter I ordered you to write to him? Go, fetch it; I would send a servant with it, to meet him on his way hither."

At this moment a servant entered, bringing letters which a special messenger from Don Antonio de Mendoza had just delivered to him, at the same time begging an interview with Don Henriquez.

After reading Don Antonio's letter, which seemed to leave it a matter of some doubt whether he should be able to reach Seville that

night, Henriquez quitted the apartment, to speak with the newly-arrived messenger, and Portia and Camilla retired together to an adjoining chamber.

Chapter II.

The two friends no sooner found themselves alone, than they at once threw aside the useless sorrows that had lately oppressed them, and set their woman's wit to work, to meet the extraordinary emergency which now presented itself, in the fact of the affianced husband of Portia being the very man on whom Camilla had irrevocably fixed her affections. For though Portia had hitherto seen no course open to her but that of yielding to the tyrannous will of her brother Henriquez, the moment she found that, by so doing, she should for ever mar the hopes of her cousin Camilla, she instantly summoned back all her faltering resolutions (which

her sincere love for Octavio had never permitted entirely to abandon her), and determined to unite with Camilla in devising some means, however desperate, of meeting the difficulties in which they seemed to be so inextricably involved.

Their first thought was to summon their faithful confidant, Flora, the waiting-woman of Portia; and their next, that Portia should risk a secret interview with her lover Octavio, (who remained concealed at his own house close at hand,) and apprize him of the situation in which all parties were placed, and beg his counsel and assistance.

As Portia had understood that her brother Henriquez intended writing to Don Antonio immediately, by the messenger who had just brought letters from him, she thought there could not be a better opportunity of putting this last resolution into practice: she, therefore, immediately borrowed Camilla's veil, and putting it on, was proceeding to seek Flora to attend her, when the latter entered the apart-

ment in great haste, and informed her lady that Don Henriquez was that moment passing through the corridor, towards that apartment, attended by the messenger who had just arrived from Don Antonio. They had scarcely time to quit the apartment for the private chamber of Portia, which adjoined to it, before Henriquez and Ernesto entered.

"Where is your mistress?" said Don Henriquez to Flora, who remained in the outer apartment. "Tell her that a confidential servant of Don Antonio's attends her here, to pay his duty to her as his future mistress, and to receive from her own hand her letter to his lord."

Then, turning to Ernesto as Flora quitted the apartment, he said—

"You'll find the lady Portia in her home dress and without her veil; but being privileged by the commands you bear, to see and greet the future bride of your lord Don Antonio, my sister will dispense with that state which

her birth and station had else required. When you have done your errand, attend me in my own apartment, and receive my letters to your lord."

Henriquez then left Ernesto; and almost at the same moment Camilla and Portia entered, attended by Flora, Portia still wearing the veil which she had borrowed from Camilla.

Seeing Camilla without a veil, Ernesto instantly approached, and was about to address her, when Portia, observing the mistake, and the lucky account to which it might be turned, had just time to apprise Camilla, and urge her to encourage it. Accordingly, the latter received Ernesto's high-flown compliments with a dignified condescension; inquired after the health of his lord, and when his arrival might be expected; and finally, desired Flora (who held Portia's letter, written by the direction of Henriquez) to hand it to Ernesto. She then dismissed Ernesto, who retired with vivid impressions of the grace, beauty, and condescen-

sion of his future mistress. Of the lineaments of Portia herself he had, of course, not seen a trace; as she did not remove the borrowed veil during the interview.

It was now to be considered whether Portia might venture to prosecute her intended interview with Octavio. But on inquiring the exact time of the evening, it was found to be near seven o'clock, and consequently too late for Portia to risk an absence from home; as her brother must by this time have nearly prepared his letter to Antonio, and would, therefore, be almost certain, in his jealous watchfulness, to inquire for and miss her. It was finally determined, therefore, that Flora should be the bearer of a message to Octavio, desiring him to repair, at a particular hour, to a door opening on the garden at the back of Don Henriquez' house, and to which there was an easy communication from Portia's private chamber, the balcony of which over-

looked it; and to wait there till he should be admitted into the garden.

This message was written on a set of tablets by means of which the lovers were in the habit of communicating, and of which each bore a key; and Flora was instantly despatched with it.

It is now time that we turn to the two lovers whose fates are so inextricably bound up with those of the unhappy ladies to whom we have just introduced the reader. We should first mention, however, that immediately on the departure of Antonio's messenger, Don Henriquez took the opportunity of hurrying to the house of his friend the Corregidor, to invite him to attend the approaching marriage of Portia; and that, meeting his kinsman Don Carlos on the way (who was coming to attend his sister Camilla home) they went to the house of the Corregidor together.

The jealous watchfulness of Henriquez over

his sister Portia had been so strict, since her forced signature of the contract to wed the unseen husband he had provided for her, that it was now many days since any communication had taken place between her and her lover.

It was now night-fall, when Octavio, who had condemned himself to a voluntary and secret imprisonment in his own house, rather than quit the neighbourhood of his mistress, ventured to issue from the half-opened door, and look forth from the portico, wrapped from head to foot in his cloak, which he held up so as almost to meet the large hat which was pressed down upon his brow.

Don Octavio was attended by his confidential valet, Diego; and they were conferring together, as to the probability of receiving any message or communication from the lady Portia, when they saw two persons approaching from the opposite end of the street, dressed in riding cloaks, and seemingly looking about

them, as if they were not well acquainted with their way. As they came nearer, Octavio said to his companion,

"Why surely, Diego, that air and gait can belong to no one but my noble friend and fellow soldier, Don Antonio de Mendoza. Yet he should be in the Flanders' wars. Nay," continued he as the persons came nearer, "it is he! I'll speak to him. He may assist us in our difficulties. And at least my life and honour will be safe in his keeping."

The strangers had now arrived in front of the portico under which Octavio and Diego were standing; and the foremost of them was about to address Octavio with some inquiry as to the place they sought, when the latter dropped his cloak from before his face, and Antonio de Mendoza immediately recognized his friend. After mutual congratulations on this unexpected meeting, Octavio invited Antonio to enter the house, informing him, however, that he was not in a condition to receive

him as he could wish, on account of an unlucky adventure which forced him to keep himself concealed, and which he promised to explain when they were alone together.

As it appeared that they were close upon the spot where Antonio de Mendoza had appointed his messenger to meet him, he declined entering the house till Ernesto should arrive; and the friends presently fell into a conversation, in the course of which Antonio informed Octavio of his having reached Seville that night, with the view of fulfilling on the morrow a marriage contract, into which he had been induced to enter, by the urgent intervention of his family and friends, with a lady residing in Seville, whom he had never seen.

"And yet," continued he, without giving Octavio time to inquire the name and family of his intended bride, "now that the time for tying the irrevocable knot is so near at hand, my courage almost fails me. The truth is, Octavio, if my honour were not so firmly en-

gaged as it is in this matter, I could find in my heart to break the contract at once, and again betake myself to the wars, where, by seeking new adventures, I might perhaps wipe out from my memory one which, the more my present circumstances counsel me to forget it, the more fresh and fair its images grow within me. If you were a lover, Octavio," continued he, "I might perhaps venture to tell you a lover's story, thus recalling it to myself for the last time; for after to-morrow the very memory of it must be buried within me, if I would hope to give my love where it will then be due. But I will not trouble you with the details of a sorrow that must seem fantastical to those who (not being lovers themselves) cannot feel it."

"If a lover," replied Octavio, "and an unhappy one, is the only fit audience for your story, we have met at a lucky moment for both of us; for me, who never had such need of fellowship in my griefs as now: and for you,

who cannot have any so great, that I cannot over-match them with greater; as you shall hear when you have related your adventure."

Thus encouraged, Antonio proceeded as follows:

"On the day after that on which the Duke of Alva gained his late victory over the Prince of Orange, a squadron of horse under my command, was despatched from the main body of the army, to cover the Limbourg frontiers, which were then much exposed to inroads from the enemy. We had scarcely reached our destination for the night, when I received intelligence that a party of the enemy had the day before surprised a small convoy of our troops, and made the whole of them prisoners, together with their charge; and that both parties were then at a spot but a very short distance from our station. I took my measures accordingly —planned a surprise—and by daybreak the enemy's party were routed, and the village in our hands.

"As soon as the heat of the affair was over, I repaired, to refresh myself, to a pavilion, in the garden of the house where the principal officer of the enemy had taken up his quarters; when, on entering it, what was my surprise and horror, to see a female form, of matchless beauty, stretched on the marble floor, seemingly dead. There was something so heavenly in the pale loveliness of the form which lay before me, that, dead as it seemed, I felt a kind of awe-stricken respect on approaching it. I, however, after a few moments' pause, lifted it from the ground, and then instantly perceived that it was not dead, but had swooned, from the effect of some sudden and violent emotion; for the right hand, which had been concealed as it lay on the ground, still grasped a dagger.

"On finding that the beautiful shrine which I had scarcely dared to profane by my touch when I believed it senseless, was tenanted by a living soul, I instantly laid it on a couch

which was at hand, and kneeling down beside it, could scarcely refrain from begging forgiveness aloud for the sacrilege I seemed to feel I had been guilty of.

"There I knelt for a considerable, gazing silently on the beautiful vision, and hoping, yet fearing at the same time, that it would presently open its eyes, and look upon me: for if it was thus when seeming dead, what must it be, I thought, when endowed with that life which which was the chief charm of all the forms and faces I had hitherto looked upon?

"At last, after a deep inspiration of the breath, the eyes *did* open; yet oh! how delighted I was to see them closed again! for they no sooner glanced upon me where I knelt, than a shuddering thrill of horror seemed to run throughout the whole frame, and then it immediately sank back into the insensibility from which it had just awakened.

"After a while the eyes again opened; and, as they once more met mine, how shall I tell

the ecstasy that seized on me, when, instead of closing in seeming horror, as they had done before, they continued gazing, and as they gazed, the whole face became gradually illuminated with an expression of eager and intense joy, which made it almost too bright and beautiful to look upon!

"Thus encouraged, what could I do but address her? In what words I did this I know not, for a sudden ecstasy seemed to seize upon me at the sight of this beautiful creature, gradually recovering her scattered senses, and gazing upon me as I spoke, and listening to every word I uttered, with marks of the most evident and unchecked delight.

"Suffice it, that I explained the circumstances which had brought me to her presence; offered her my protection; and was listening with the most eager joy to her frank acceptance of my aid and guidance under the extraordinary and painful circumstances in which she found herself, and which she was on the point of

explaining to me;—when suddenly, the confused voices of my soldiers were heard without, pronouncing my name vehemently, and calling one another to arms, while the sounds of musketry were distinguishable at no great distance.

"Without waiting even to take leave of my fair charge, I rushed out, and having placed a guard round the pavilion, instantly mustered my men; for I found that an ambush of the enemy had attacked us by surprise, and were on the point of entering the village.

"We met and repulsed them in a short time, but in so doing I was severely wounded, and carried senseless from the field; and on my recovery could learn no tidings whatever of the lady I had left in the pavilion, except that she had been removed from the spot by her friends, on the very day after that on which our first (and last) interview took place.

"Thus, Octavio, was a momentary glimpse of heaven itself opened to my ravished sight, only to be snatched away for ever! Thus was a

beautiful vision (for such it seems) shown to my deceived senses, only to take away the brightness from all after realities! And thus," continued Antonio, "have I been induced, by pure indifferenee to my future fate, to contract my hand where (I much fear me) I can never give my heart: for, henceforth, all women are alike to me."

"And may I inquire," said Octavio, "which of our fair dames of Seville it is, on whom my friend is about to bestow his heartless hand?"

"She is a lady," replied Antonio, "of great virtue, noble, young, and (as I hear) distinguished for her beauty, even among the beauties of Seville. You must know her, doubtless, or at least her brother; she is the sister of ———"

At this moment some one was seen approaching quickly towards the spot where the party were standing; and Octavio instantly retired within the door of his house, without

hearing the conclusion of his friend's sentence, leaving Diego outside with Don Antonio.

The stranger proved to be Ernesto, the confidential servant of Antonio, who had come in search of his master. Diego now retired within the door also, but almost immediately returned, with a message to Antonio, begging him to dismiss his servant as soon as possible.

Ernesto informed Antonio of the result of his interview with Henriquez, and also of his having seen the (supposed) future bride, whose beauty and condescension he described in the most lively terms. He then presented to Antonio the two letters with which he was charged, one from Henriquez, and the other from the lady herself, and also the key of the suite of apartments which Henriquez had allotted to Antonio in his own house.

Ernesto was then dismissed to the post-house, with orders to convey the luggage to their new lodgings; and Octavio again joined his friend, who proposed that he should imme-

diately accompany him on his first visit of ceremony to his bride.

Just as Octavio was replying to this, by reminding Antonio of his forced confinement, and they were retiring into the house together, Flora reached the spot, almost out of breath, and hastily putting the tablets of her mistress into Octavio's hands, bad him not delay a moment in perusing them, as they contained matter of the utmost importance to the happiness of both.

The party now retired into the house; when, on opening and perusing the tablets, Octavio informed his friend that what he there read must preclude him from then replying to his late confidence by a similar confidence on his part, as he was summoned to attend his mistress at an appointed spot, to consult with her on some new emergency, the nature of which she had not explained. Octavio added, that the words of the message he had received seemed to imply the need of a friend's presence,

and that he must therefore instantly go and seek one; for though, he said, there was no one in whose judgment and honour he could so safely confide as in those of Antonio, he could not think of engaging *him* in an affair which might lead to danger, and which must at any rate occupy his time and attention, at a moment when they were so deeply pledged elsewhere.

To this Antonio would on no account listen, but insisted on accompaning Octavio; urging the danger, as well as the delay, attendant on seeking, at that hour, any other friend; and adding, moreover, that his message to his intended brother-in-law (whom he did not name) had left it quite uncertain whether he should arrive in Seville that night, and that consequently he felt himself free, for a few hours longer at least, to follow that inclination which led him anywhere but to the feet of a new and unknown mistress.

Octavio was too sensible of the urgency of

the case, to be very long in persuading himself to accept this friendly offer; and accordingly, having briefly explained to Antonio the circumstances in which he was placed by the zealous and vindictive persecution of his mistress's brother, who believed him to be his rival in another lady's affections, and whom he dared not undeceive, on account of the unhappy termination of the affray which had arisen out of that mistaken belief, they proceeded together towards the appointed spot, attended by Diego.

Chapter III.

Returning to the ladies Portia and Camilla, we shall find them leaning from the balcony of Portia's private chamber, which overlooked the back door of the garden, watching the coming of Octavio. This, however, they were pervented from doing by any other than their sense of hearing; for the moon had not yet risen, and what little light had hitherto been furnished by the stars was now completely cut off, by the presence of thick clouds, which covered the whole hemisphere.

While Portia and Camilla, still attended by Portia's waiting woman Flora, were thus watching, and conferring together, in the utmost

anxiety, as to the probable return of Portia's brother, Don Henriquez, they heard the signal usually given by Octavio to announce his presence beneath the balcony.

Portia instantly descended to the garden, leaving Camilla and Flora above, to give timely notice in case of the dreaded approach of her brother; little thinking that he was at that very moment within a few yards of the gate itself which she was about to open for the admission of her lover. In fact, Henriquez and Carlos had stayed later at the Corregidor's than they intended, and finding the way dark, had determined on entering by the back gate through the garden, instead of going round to the front of the house.

Having ascertained that the signal she had heard really was Octavio's, and that he was accompanied by Diego and a friend, Portia proceeded cautiously to the door, and opened it; not, however, without causing a sound which instantly reached the jealous ears of

Henriquez, who stepped up quickly, and was perceived by Diego just in time to prevent the mutual enemies from coming in actual contact with each other. Neither party, however, recognised the persons of the other; and Octavio whispered Diego to walk forward with him, and let the strangers (as he supposed them to be) pass on; while Henriquez, filled in an instant with a thousand suspicions, at hearing his own door unlocked secretly at this hour, stepped up to it cautiously, followed closely by Carlos.

In the mean time Antonio, who had been standing a short space behind, while Octavio went beneath the balcony to give the appointed signal, hearing the door open, and not perceiving anything of his friend, approached it also, and was considering for a moment whether he should enter or not, when a female voice was heard from within the half open door, saying, in a low tone—"Come! come in! what do you stay for?"

At these words, in which Henriquez instantly recognised the voice of his sister Portia, he could no longer contain his fury, and was drawing his sword, and rushing forward without speaking, but was restrained by his more prudent friend, Carlos. During this momentary delay, the door opened fully, and Portia stepped from behind it, and seeing the figure of Antonio in the darkness, said to him—

"You may come in safely, Octavio; I have taken care to ensure timely notice of my cruel brother's coming."

"I am not Octavio, madam," said Antonio; and he was about to explain who he was, when the affrighted Portia exclaimed,

"Not Octavio? Who are you then? And who is that, whose dark shadow I see against the sky?"

Henriquez could contain himself no longer, but drawing his sword, he rushed to the open door, explaining—

"'Tis I, vile woman! your injured and dis-

honoured brother, and *his* mortal enemy." (pointing to Antonio). "Whoe'er he be, he shall pay this insulting treachery with his life."

On perceiving Henriquez spring forward, Antonio had stepped within the open door; and now, hearing his words, he lost no time in preparing to defend himself; while Portia, at the sound of her brother's voice, had rushed terrified away. Antonio, therefore, was forced to retire within the garden, towards he knew not whither, defending himself from the united attacks of the enraged Henriquez, and his friend Carlos—who joined him as soon as he had complied with Henriquez' desire, of securing the door to prevent an escape.

We are compelled to leave the three combatants to the mercy of the protecting darkness for a few moments, while we return to Octavio; who, fancying that the strangers whom Diego had seen approaching must now have passed out of observation, came back again to the door, and was looking about for

Antonio to accompany him in,—when, what were his feelings at hearing the sound of his friend's voice within the garden, accompanied by the clash of swords, and the threatenings and exclamations of Henriquez, and at finding the garden door fast closed!

This was not a state of things to admit of a moment's pause or consideration, as to the course to be adopted. Octavio felt that he must instantly fly to his friend's assistance at all risks; and therefore, bidding Diego follow him, he by the aid of some shrubs mounted the wall of the garden, and dropping on the other side, joined the combatants.

At this juncture Don Carlos, more prudent than Henriquez, called aloud for the servants of the house to bring lights and assistance; while Henriquez, growing still more ungovernable in his rage, was rushing forward in the darkness, when, stumbling over something which lay in the path, he fell, and lost his sword.

There was just light enough afforded now, by the rising moon, to admit of Carlos perceiving that it was his friend who had fallen. He therefore immediately ceased attacking the opposite party, in order to afford assistance to Henriquez, and search for his sword; and in this interval Portia came from her concealment, and beseeched Octavio in the most earnest manner to make a last and desperate effort to secure her, by instant flight, from the future tyranny of her brother.

Antonio, who was watching the whole scene, joined in urging this as the best step which circumstances admitted; and accordingly, in a few moments all the three were safely outside the garden walls, and on their way towards Octavio's house, whither they at once determined on repairing.

They had scarcely passed fairly beyond the confines of the garden, when Carlos, perceiving, by the silence, that the intruding party had fled, urged upon Henriquez the instant neces-

sity of searching for and securing his sister Portia; while Carlos himself promised to follow the fugitives, and if possible trace their steps to their place of retreat, and thus secure the means of revenging the insult and outrage which had just been so fortunately interrupted.

The defeated rage of Henriquez had still left him sense enough to see the reasonableness of this advice; and accordingly he followed it, leaving Carlos to pursue the fugitives;—in which enterprise he was not a little assisted by the blundering cowardice of Diego, Octavio's valet, who, instead of following his master's orders of climbing the wall and accompanying him into the garden, prudently anticipated that the affair was pretty sure to end in fighting, and therefore determined on keeping himself out of harm's way, by obeying only the first half of his master's directions. In fact, during the whole of the scene, from the descent of Octavio into the garden, to his flight with

Portia at the door, Diego had been safely seated at the top of the wall, watching, as well as the darkness would permit, the progress of events, and (to do him justice) ready to take advantage of any occasion that might present itself, of assisting his master's views, always provided he could do so with perfect safety to his own person.

Seeing, therefore, the flight of his master and Portia through the garden door, Diego immediately descended, and followed them closely; and perceiving, as he did so, that he himself was followed at a short distance by another person, whom he took to be his master's friend Antonio, instead of giving the alarm to Octavio, he kept making signals, by which Carlos was enabled finally to trace the whole party into the house of Octavio, where they took refuge.

This, however, was not effected without Diego's discovering his mistake at the last moment; but thinking that it was then too late

for remedy, and moreover fearing to disclose his blunder to his master, Carlos was suffered to bear off his knowledge of their place of retreat, unknown to all the rest of the party.

Chapter IV.

We must now return to the Lady Camilla and Flora, (Portia's waiting-woman), whom we left keeping anxious watch in the balcony of the Lady Portia's chamber. There they had waited during the whole of the scene just described, moved to an agony of apprehension and uncertainty, as to the nature of the events that were taking place in the garden beneath them, yet not daring to move from the balcony, either to confirm or dissipate their fears. At length when the momentary absence of all the parties engaged in the affray below had left the scene of it in utter silence—a silence which seemed

even more dreadful than the fearful sounds which had preceded it—Camilla could bear her situation no longer, and she determined to descend into the garden, and try if they could ascertain what had become of Portia: for as to all the rest of the party, the extreme darkness of the night had not permitted them even to guess of whom it consisted, and they could only be sure that Henriquez formed one of it, from the exclamations of rage and passion that were perpetually escaping him during the affray.

After some hesitation, therefore, and not without a dread which nothing but her affectionate anxiety as to the fate of her cousin Portia could overcome, Camilla cautiously descended into the garden, preceded by Flora. But they had scarcely issued from the door which opened from Portia's suite of apartments, when Flora retreated in great haste, exclaiming that she perceived Don Henriquez

coming towards them, with his sword drawn, and attended by servants bearing lights.

They had scarcely time to conceal themselves behind the open door, before Henriquez reached the spot, apparently furious with rage, exclaiming against his sister in the most vehement language, as a stain to his house and honour, and vowing to sacrifice her life the instant he could recover possession of her. From this the trembling listeners at least gathered that she had escaped his fury for the present; and they had scarcely time to congratulate themselves on this fact, before their fears were aroused afresh, and redoubled, by Henriquez calling loudly on Flora, and sending some of the servants in search of her.

Hearing this, Flora cautiously mounted a few of the stairs which they had just descended; and then, returning again in seeming haste, presented herself before Henriquez,

whose own rage and agitation were luckily too strong to permit him to perceive the effects that mingled fear for her own safety, and anxiety for that of her mistress, were producing upon the trembling Abigail.

Henriquez merely inquired, in a few abrupt words, where her mistress was; and receiving for answer that she had left her chamber about half an hour before, for the purpose of descending into the garden, his worst fears were confirmed by this intelligence, and he took no further notice of Flora, who again retired behind the door where Camilla was still concealed; and Henriquez was passing on, intending to search that part of the house which had been assigned to his expected guest, Antonio de Mendoza, when Don Carlos entered the garden by the back door.

From the very first words uttered by Don Carlos on joining Henriquez, the Lady Camilla (who recognized her brother's voice) perceived

that it now behoved them to listen with the utmost care to all that might pass.

Carlos informed his friend that, by the unconscious aid of one of the party, he had been completely successful in tracing the fugitives to their place of retreat; which he described as the second house beyond the church, in the street of Saint Jago; and he added that there could unfortunately be no doubt of Portia having accompanied them, as the fellow who had aided his discovery of their retreat by at first mistaking him for one of his own party, had repeatedly boasted, as he had him come on, how triumphantly his master had carried the lady off.

The first impulse of Henriquez on hearing this at once welcome and unwelcome news, was instantly to collect his people together, and attack the house where his sister had been conveyed. But this wild project was with some difficulty over-ruled by the calculating

prudence of Carlos, who represented to Henriquez the folly of risking his own person, as well as the heavy penalty of the law, in the mere hasty, and, in all probability, unsuccessful attempt to effect that which the law itself, if properly applied, would enable him to accomplish with certainty as well as safety, and with almost as little delay as would attend the plan proposed by Henriquez. Carlos added, that he would go instantly to the Corregidor, and claim the assistance of himself and his officers in securing the fugitives, on the plea of their having attacked the person of Henriquez on his own premises, and severely wounded one of his servants, in a felonious attempt to stain the honour of a noble house, by carrying off the Lady Portia.

After much argument and persuasion, Henriquez having reluctantly consented to adopt the above plan of action, Carlos instantly proceeded to the Corregidor's, to put it in practice; while

Camilla and Flora, who had overheard all that past between the disputants, as promptly determined that there was not a moment to be lost in endeavouring, at any risk, to inform Octavio and Portia of what was going on; leaving them to arrange their measures accordingly.

END OF VOLUME II.

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